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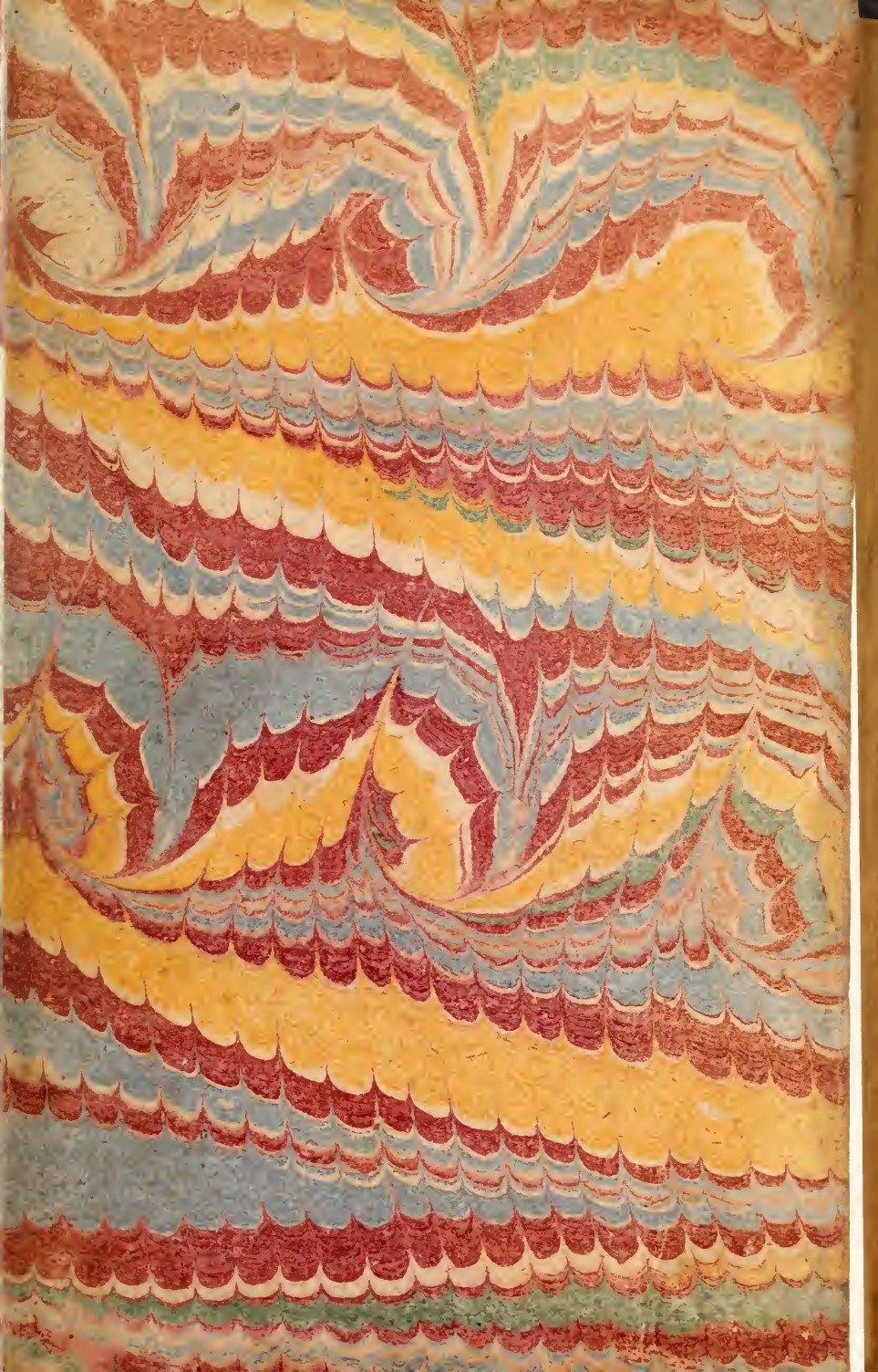

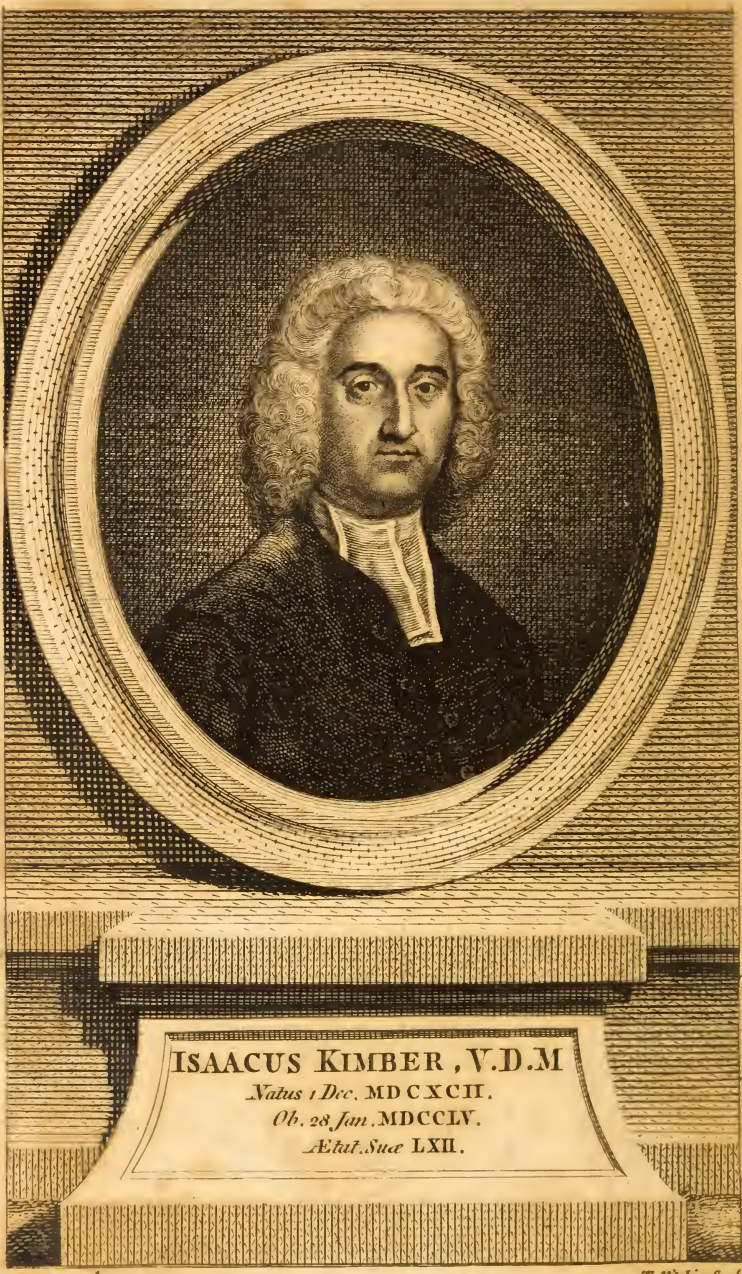
ISAACUS KIMBER, V.D.M
Natus 1 Dec. MDCXCII.
Ob. 28 Jan. MDCCLV.
Ætat. Suæ LXII.
Smith Pinx.
T. Kitchin Sculp.

SERMONS

On the Moſt Intereſting

RELIGIOUS, MORAL,

AND

PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

By the late Reverend and Learned

Mr. *ISAAC KIMBER.*

Printed from his own MANUSCRIPTS.

To which is prefixed,

MEMOIRS of the LIFE and WRITINGS of the AUTHOR.

LONDON:

Printed by, and for C. and J. ACKERS, in St. *John*'s-*Street*;

And Sold by J. NOON, at the *White-Hart*, in *Cheapſide*; and R. BALDWIN, at the *Roſe*, in *Pater-Noſter-Row*.

M.DCC.LVI.

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TO

John Keeling, *Esq*;

One of His MAJESTY's Juſtices of the Peace for the County of *Middleſex*.

SIR,

THE Author of the following Diſcourſes, who was perſonally known to You, was adorned and actuated by all thoſe mild

and ſociable qualities, which never fail of endearing a man to his fellow creatures; and the principles and maxims therein inculcated and inforced, are a lively repreſentation of his own honeſt mind.

How naturally, Sir, then, am I directed to a Patron, in You, for this Volume; a Patron, who, by his integrity, and univerſal charity, unfettered by the narrow prejudices of party or opinion; by his great love to his fellow creatures, and his daily exerciſe of the greateſt and nobleſt of the Chriſtian virtues, plainly proves the poſſibility of living up to theſe heavenly precepts. All that have the pleaſure to know You, to live within the ſphere of Your activity, will readily abſolve me of adulation in what I have advanced; and as to the envious, the malicious, the ill-tempered, and the ſplenetick, they cannot,

not, it is plain, reliſh theſe juſt encomiums; for it is the undoubted characteriſtick of bad minds, that, having no title to praiſe themſelves, they can neither conceive, nor will acknowledge, the juſtice with which it is given to the good and the deſerving.

The kindneſs, the generoſity, with which You have encouraged the ſubſcription to theſe remains of my Father, would, indeed, have been ſingly a motive for this Dedication; but give me leave, Sir, to ſay, with all that honeſt warmth of gratitude that has taken poſſeſſion of my heart, I am proud, to the laſt degree, that Your name appears before them, as You are really an example of all thoſe exalted graces it was their deſign to inſpire.

That You may continue long, the delight and comfort of your Family

and Friends; and, as a Magiſtrate, to be *a terror to evil doers, and a praiſe to them who do well*; and that, after participating of every bleſſing this mortal life can afford, You may reap the reward of all Your virtues, in another and better ſtate of exiſtence, is the ſincere prayer of,

SIR,

Your moſt obliged,

Moſt obedient,

And moſt humble Servant,

Edward Kimber.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE and WRITINGS

Of the Reverend

Mr. *ISAAC KIMBER.*

THE AUTHOR of the following diſcourſes, was born at *Wantage*, in *Berkſhire*, on *December* 1, 1692, and received the rudiments of a learned education from the Reverend Mr. *Sloper*, then maſter of a private grammar-ſchool in that town; and who had, ſome years before, the maſterſhip of the free-ſchool there; but was turned out, by the biſhop of the dioceſe, upon the evidence of a buſy informer, for ſcrupling to take the oaths to the government. This gentleman, as our Author was very frequently uſed to ſay, bating the peculiar principles he held, was a moſt worthy man, an excellent tutor, and had the happineſs of inſtructing ſome youths, who afterwards made a great figure in the learned world; amongſt whom was the late very excellent Prelate, Dr. *Butler*, Biſhop of *Durham*. Under Mr. *Sloper* he made a conſiderable progreſs in the *Greek*

and *Latin* tongues, in which he was much forwarded by the kind aid of Mr. *Jones*, the very learned paſtor of the Baptiſt Church at *Wantage*, who, taking a particular liking to him, made him his companion; and, in his ſociety, he has often told me, he ſpent ſome of the happieſt moments of his life. Mr. *Jones* was a man of ſome fortune, and had a well-choſen library, to which his pupil had free recourſe; and as he was alſo much turned to mathematical purſuits, his young friend reaped great profit from his converſation: And, perhaps, to his intimacy with Mr. *Jones*, may, in great meaſure, be aſcribed his inclination to the miniſtry; tho' indeed it was what his parents wiſhed he would direct his mind to, and for which he ſeemed peculiarly deſigned, by his ſerious, thoughtful temper, which was viſible in his earlieſt youth, and his natural love of virtue and ſobriety, and abhorrence of every thing trifling, vicious, or prophane.

With the ſtock of knowledge he had acquired in the country, he came up to *London* to perfect himſelf in the languages, under Profeſſor *Ward* of *Greſham College*, and in academical exerciſes under the direction of the Reverend Mr. *John Eames*, F. R. S. And the Reverend Mr. *Joſeph Burroughs* has given ample teſtimony of the ſwift progreſs he made under theſe excellent inſtructors *; a teſtimony

* See that gentleman's ſermon occaſioned by his death, *p.* 23.

mony the more to be relied upon, as that learned gentleman was witneſs to, and encouraged him in, his ſtudies.

When he had qualified himſelf for the miniſtry, he was very particularly patronized, by the Hon. *Joſeph Collett*, Eſq; late Governor of *Fort St. George* in the *Eaſt-Indies*; and, to the converſation of that gentleman, and his brother, Mr. *Samuel Collett*, whoſe chriſtian labours have endeared him to all good men, he uſed to aſcribe the eſtabliſhment, in his mind, of thoſe generous ſentiments of univerſal love and charity, that enmity to impoſition and perſecution, in matters of mere faith, which governed him throughout the remainder of his life: For he uſed to confeſs, that he had imbibed ſome narrow *Calviniſtical* notions in the country, either from his parents, or his beloved paſtor, which, when his reaſon was better informed, he departed from with openneſs and ingenuity.

It is not my buſineſs, in the ſhort compaſs I have allotted myſelf, to give a minute detail of every hardſhip, and they were many, that our Author endured at his firſt ſetting out in life; the dictatorial manner in which he was treated by ſome bigots, on the one hand, which gave exquiſite pain to his mind, and the conceſſions his modeſty and dependency forced from him, to thoſe of a more free way of thinking, on the other, he ever remembered with regret. His marrying at twenty-five

five years of age, before he had gained a ſettlement in the world, ſubjected him ſtill more to the humours of others, which the gentleneſs of his diſpoſition gave him not the power or courage to contradict: But I would not be underſtood that he was ever guilty of any criminal compliances; no, he maintained his integrity and his virtue untainted, thro' the whole courſe of his life. If, however, he met with harſh and unchriſtian treatment from ſome perſons, he was fully recompenced in the conſtant friendſhip of other valuable, eſteemed patrons, amongſt whom he ever ſpoke with a particular veneration of the late Dr. *Hunt*, Mr. afterwards Sir *Nathaniel Hodges*, Dr. *Gale*, and ſome others, whoſe loſs he never mentioned, without being melted even to tears.

As he did not meet with the encouragement he expected as a miniſter, he very early engaged in the buſineſs of a writer, and one of the firſt productions he gave to the world, was the Life of *Oliver Cromwell*, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of *England*, *Scotland* and *Ireland*, in octavo, printed for Meſſrs. *Brotherton* and *Cox*. This piece met with a very good reception from the publick, and has paſſed thro' ſeveral editions, univerſally eſteemed for its ſtile and its impartiality; and as the Author's name was not made publick, tho' it was always known to his friends, it was at firſt very confidently aſcribed

ed to Dr. *Gibſon*, Biſhop of *London*. Soon after, he was concerned with Meſſrs. *Bailey*, *Hodges*, and *Ridpath*, in compiling a hiſtory of *England*, in four volumes in 8vo. which was printed for Meſſrs. *Midwinter*, *Fayram*, *Batley*, &c. in 1722, the 3d and 4th volumes of which were ſolely his, and a large impreſſion was diſpoſed of. A few years afterwards, he wrote the life of Biſhop *Beveridge*, which is prefixed to the folio edition of his works, of which he was the Editor.

In the year 1724, he was called to the paſtoral charge, in conjunction with Mr. *Samuel Acton*, at *Namptwich* in *Cheſhire*; but as his going there was preceeded by an attempt to fetter his mind with ſubſcriptions to, and impoſitions of articles of faith, ſo his abode was rendered uneaſy, for the three years he officiated amongſt them, by the untoward and perverſe ſpirits of ſome of the principal perſons of the congregation; and, I remember, his intimacy with the worthy incumbent of the pariſh, and Mr. *Vaudrey*, the *Preſbyterian* miniſter in that town, was inſinuated as a crime, in that it betokened his hanging looſe to ſome fundamental points which they thought eſſential to church-communion and ſalvation. I mention this inſtance, as a ſpecimen of many other as wiſe objections againſt his conduct, from which ſome of them thought themſelves warranted to withdraw their promiſed ſubſcriptions from him, either in whole, or in part; and

and a principal perſon, then near eighty years of age (by whoſe promiſe of leaving an annuity to the congregation, at his death, for the better ſupport of their miniſter, he had been principally induced to quit *London)* once more entering into the marriage ſtate, and threatening not to leave them one farthing, he found he could no longer ſupport his family upon the ſcanty pittance his ſalary was reduced to, and determined, after much conflict within himſelf, to leave them, which, after many altercations on both ſides, he executed at the latter end of the year 1727. The modeſt chearfulneſs of his behaviour during his reſidence at *Namptwich*, had ſo endeared him to moſt of the principal people there, of all parties and perſuaſions, that his departure was very much regretted; and, indeed, when he took leave of the congregation, which he did in a pathetick farewel ſermon, moſt of them wept. His affection to them was very great, and it muſt be ſaid that moſt of them loved and reverenced him.

Upon his return to *London*, he officiated, as morning preacher, or aſſiſtant, to his much loved and learned friend, Dr. *John Kinch* *, in *Old Artillery-Lane*, and, occaſionally, at *Pinners-Hall*, for Dr. *Hunt*; and was alſo engaged in correcting the preſs, and other literary buſineſs, for Mr. *John*

* By whom, upon his death-bed, he was recommended as his ſucceſſor; but the hiſtory of his being rejected, is too long to be inſerted.

John Darby, and others. At the ſame time he compiled a periodical pamphlet, called, *The Monthly Chronicle*, which ſubſiſted from *January*, 1728, to *May*, 1732, and then was dropped. In part of this period, he was likewiſe concerned with Mr. *Drew*, of the *Union Fire-Office*, as his aſſiſtant, and ſupported theſe various labours with a quiet and even temper, and a chearful mind, tho' viſited with a very ſore affliction in his Wife's being deprived of her reaſon; a misfortune, which, he ſometimes would hint, was brought on, by her deep ſenſe of the ill treatment he had met with at *Namptwich*. This malady had two ſeveral ſtages; for ſome years it diſplayed itſelf in ravings and fury, by which his perſon was often endangered, and then ſunk into an indolent kind of frenzy, which continued all the reſt of her life. As they had been a remarkably happy couple, this misfortune lay very heavy upon him, and put him to various and great expences, even beyond what his circumſtances could well ſupport; but a patient ſubmiſſion to, and firm truſt in Providence, enabled him to bear a ſad complication of diſtreſſes, like a man, and a chriſtian. His love for her ſeemed rather encreaſed by this dreadful viſitation; and, after twenty years and upwards, that ſhe continued thus afflicted, her death gave him the moſt poignant ſorrow he ever felt, and, in ſome meaſure, contributed to haſten his own.

In

In the year 1731, he was concerned in a periodical work, of which Mr. *Charles Ackers* was one of the proprietors, and that worthy Gentleman, once kindly and humanely enquiring into his circumſtances, and finding them very narrow, generouſly offered to make room for him, as corrector, at his office. With him he continued for two or three years, and then his old maſter, the learned Dr. *Ward*, pitching upon him, in conjunction with the Rev. Mr. *Edward Sandercock*, to carry on his grammar-ſchool, near *Moor-Fields*, which he quitted in their favour, he conſented to his leaving him. This ſeminary had always been in high eſtimation, from the great character of the maſter; and the prices paid by the ſcholars were very conſiderable. They carried it on for ſome time with ſucceſs; but, by one means or other, it beginning to decreaſe in the number of pupils, Mr. *Sandercock* quitted it to Mr. *Kimber*, who held it ſingly, for about half a year, and then was obliged to relinquiſh it. And now, he again recurred to his faſt and faithful friend, Mr. *Ackers*, who reinſtated him in his former place, and it muſt be ſaid to the honour of the learned gentleman he diſcharged, to make room for him, that far from ſhewing any reſentment thereat, he afterwards did him many conſiderable ſervices. It is natural and reaſonable to make mention here, of that firm and ſet-

tled

tled friendſhip between Mr. *Ackers* and our Author, which was his main ſupport through the remainder of his days. That Gentleman, who venerated his virtues, and loved his perſon, made it his ſtudy to render him as eaſy and happy as his ſituation would allow; nor was his ſon Mr. *John Ackers*, at all behind hand, in treading in his father's ſteps. It may be ſaid, the friendly aſſiſtance of the former, was ever extended to his moſt preſſing neceſſities; and thoſe good offices were returned by a ſincere and thorough attachment on his part; and ſuch tender and delicate ſentiments, that to mention their names in a diſreſpectful way, though in the moſt diſtant manner, could never be born by him with any tolerable degree of patience, and was ever a motive for his quitting the moſt favoured company. Indeed, it ſeemed to be the conſtant ſtudy of that whole family, to do every thing in their power to oblige him; the late Mrs. *Mary Ackers* loved him as a father, and the preſent Mrs. *Margaretta Maria Ackers*, ever ſhewed him reſpect and deference, and after his deceaſe, diſplayed the utmoſt regard to his memory.

As the buſineſs he was engaged in, demanded his conſtant attendance, he had not latterly thoſe opportunities of ſeeing his old friends, which he formerly enjoyed, and being, by the decay of his ſight, and the neglect of

of that denomination of diſſenters to which, by principle, he was attached*, entirely confined to ſedentary labour, he ſeldom appeared in the pulpit, except when called upon by the Rev. Mr. *Burroughs*, whoſe name he never mentioned, but with an accent of the higheſt and moſt fervent affection, the late Rev. Dr. *James Foſter* and Mr. *Joſeph Morris*, his boſom friend, who juſt lived to regret his departure, and the Rev. Mr. *Barron*, of *Deptford*. In the year 1740, he wrote the reign of his preſent majeſty, which is added to the laſt edition of *Howell*'s *Medulla Hiſt. Ang.* and ſoon afterwards, an Hiſtory of *England*, in one volume 8vo, printed in 1745, for Mr. *Thomas Cox*, which will hereafter, perhaps, be eſteemed, by competent judges, the beſt Abridgment of the *Engliſh* Hiſtory extant. The literary performances, that, during the laſt twenty years of his life, he either prepared for the preſs, or lent his aſſiſtance to, one way or another, would be too numerous for mention; as his judgment in thoſe matters was conſulted by all ranks of Authors; and, but that the diſorder of his wife, the follies and misfortunes of his children were always a dead weight upon his labours, would, in conjunction

* This is not intended as a reflection; though I could much enlarge in the proof of it. Particular perſons amongſt them, were ever ready to do him ſervice, and actually did confer repeated favours upon him, of which he ever retained a due ſenſe.

junction with his conſtant employs, at leaſt have afforded him competency, eaſe and happineſs in his declining days.

It would be difficult to add any thing to the character already given of him by the Rev. Mr. *Burroughs*, in the diſcourſe before quoted, or to give a better idea of his manner of preaching, and the following diſcourſes; they indeed will beſt diſcover the amiable diſpoſition of the Author. If he ſuffers at all by this poſthumous publication, all the fault reſts with me; though I honeſtly recurred, to what I knew were his lateſt ſentiments, in ſelecting the ſermons that compoſe it. Mr. *Burroughs*'s want of health rendering it impoſſible for him to undertake the friendly office, which otherwiſe, he would willingly have performed, and the death of Mr. *Morris*, who had engaged in it, threw them into my hands, and, at the deſire of *Charles Ackers*, Eſq; whoſe regard to his friend's memory, was the motive of their being preſented to the world, I willingly became the Editor. No doubt is to be made, that, if the author had prepared them himſelf, for the preſs, many luxuriancies would have been pruned, and many additions made, and the language would certainly have been more improved; for, this I may aſſure the publick, that no liberties were taken in making alterations or additions, and that they were faithfully printed *verbatim* from the author's own manuſcripts.

Edward Kimber.

TO THE

MEMORY

Of the Reverend and Learned

Mr. *ISAAC KIMBER.*

FAIN would a Muſe, by thee firſt taught to ſoar,
In plaintive lays, thy ſudden loſs deplore;
Paint the diſtreſsful pangs each boſom ſwells,
Where pining grief, where gloomy ſorrow dwells:
But reaſon pleads—'Tis ſelfiſh all, and vain,
Tho' loſs to us, thy change, to thee 'tis gain;
Thy faith thou'ſt kept—the dreadful ſtrife is paſt,
And crown'd with bliſs, thy joys ſhall ever laſt.

See Friendſhip droops, the trickling tear deſcends,
And burſting ſighs thy doleſome hearſe attends;
Thus art thou wail'd, who knew'ſt the ev'ry art
To ſooth, to meliorate, to chear the heart.
In thee THE ISRAELITE INDEED was ſeen,
No guile thy ſoul diſguis'd, deform'd thy mein;
All fair, all pure, thy mental worth ſtill ſhone,
And made each breaſt that knew thee all thy own.

Wiſdom, bright radiance, Science, urg'd thy flight,
Thro' all their flow'ry paths, to heaven and light;
Learnt thee, with fond avidity, to riſe,
To claim an int'reſt with thy kindred ſkies;
To ſpurn the idle toys of mortal care,
And place thy firm, thy ſure dependance there.

Warm

On the late Rev. Mr. ISAAC KIMBER.

Warm in Religion's cauſe, her ſteady friend,
Thy precepts ſtrove our hearts, our lives t'amend;
And free from heat, or ſuperſtitious zeal,
Clearly the ſacred truths thou did'ſt reveal;
Thy doctrines with thy lov'd example ſquar'd,
So much admir'd, ſo copy'd, ſo rever'd.

Enamour'd with the taſk, the Muſe would ſtray,
Thy private worth, thy virtues all diſplay;
Would weep, lov'd, honour'd ſhade, in thy deceaſe,
A Sage that ſooth'd the gentle hours of peace;
That through our ſouls, with irreſiſtleſs ſway,
Darted unſully'd reaſon's forceful ray:
But let theſe pages ſpeak thy heav'nly mind,
By every Chriſtian, ſocial grace refin'd;
Where thy great MASTER's laws, all pure, divine,
With added powers of mild perſuaſion ſhine.

Freed from the ills that wait this wretched life,
Its toils perpetual, waſting cares, and ſtrife,
Safe art thou landed on th'immortal ſhore,
Where pains, where weakneſs, diſcords vex no more.
And, ah! when Providence with wiſe deſign,
Shall call us hence, may we thy concert join;
And ſafe arriv'd in thoſe bright realms of day,
Have all our earthly ſorrows wip'd away!

Edward Kimber.

A

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THE

CONTENTS.

SERMONS I, II.

The Fear of GOD, a fundamental Duty.

PROV. xiv. 27.

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. Page 1, 15

SERMON III.

The Love of GOD insured by Righteousness.

PSAL. cxlvi. 8. lat. part.

The LORD loveth the righteous. 32

SERMON IV.

The great Duties of Christianity, recommended and explained.

JUDE *ver.* 20, 21.

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying always in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. 53

SER-

CONTENTS.

SERMON V.

The Nature and Obligation of Prayer.

1 THESS. v. 17.

Pray without ceasing. Page 85

SERMONS VI, VII.

The Loveliness and Efficacy of Charity.

1 COR. xiii. 4—7.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 108, 125

SERMONS VIII, IX.

Humility and Meekness Christian Virtues.

MATT. v. 3.

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 142, 162

SERMON X.

The Fruits of the Spirit.

GALAT.

CONTENTS.

GALAT. v. 22, 23.

But the fruit of the ſpirit is love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith, meekneſs, temperance: Againſt ſuch there is no law. Page 186

SERMON XI.

GOD our Saviour and Deliverer.

PSAL. l. 15.

And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me. 206

SERMON XII.

CHRIST manifeſted, and Obedience to him commanded.

MATT. xvii. 5. lat. part.

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed; hear ye him. 242

SERMON XIII.

Of being, by GOD, in CHRIST.

1 COR. i. 30.

But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption. 266

SER-

CONTENTS.

SERMON XIV.

CHRIST the Light of the World.

JOHN viii. 12.

Then ſpake Jeſus again unto them, ſaying, I am the light of the world: He that followeth me, ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life. Page 290

SERMONS XV, XVI, XVII.

Salvation wrought by the Grace of GOD.

TITUS ii. 11, 12.

For the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts; we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world. 309, 332, 355

SERMON XVIII.

The Vanity and Uncertainty of Human Life.

JAMES iv. 14. lat. part.

For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away. 376

SERMON XIX.

The Frailty of all Worldly Enjoyments.

CONTENTS.

1 JOHN ii. 17.

And the world paſſeth away, and the luſt thereof: but he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever. Page 394

SERMON XX.

Proofs of the Reſurrection and Final Judgment.

ACTS xvii. 31.

Becauſe he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead. 417

SER-

SERMON I.

The Fear of GOD, a fundamental Duty.

PROV. xiv. 27.

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the ſnares of death.

SERM. 1.

WHOEVER makes the leaſt obſervation, muſt ſee that there is a great deal of miſery in the world; and there is reaſon to think that there is much more miſery than appears to common obſervers, being hid from their eyes by ſplendid and gay outſides. Now all this miſery, whether apparent or otherwiſe, is occaſioned by vice, or by men's acting otherwiſe than reaſon, and truth, and righteouſneſs require. By vice, I ſay, either in ourſelves or others: If we are vicious ourſelves, and do not repent, this will infallibly bring real miſery upon us, both in this ſtate, and in any other we may exiſt in; if we are virtuous, and yet ſuffer, this is occaſioned uſually by the vices of others, who are injurious, oppreſſive and unreaſonable.

SERM. I. Indeed ſome kinds of miſery, as ſickneſs and death, are the natural reſult of our preſent ſtate; but even this ſtate of mankind is declared in revelation to be occaſioned by ſin, *i. e.* the ſin of our firſt parents, by whom death, and all its attendants came into the world; and many of theſe inconveniencies may be heightened and increaſed by vices and irregularities of our more immediate anceſtors. Now vice being of ſuch a pernicious nature both to ourſelves and others, being the occaſion of ſo much miſery in this world, and of all the miſery that is, or may be in a future ſtate, we ought by all means to avoid, or timely to forſake ſuch a deſtructive thing, and the means of avoiding it ſhould be moſt highly eſteemed, regarded, and attended to by us. The word of God chiefly furniſhes us with theſe means of avoiding ſin and vice, but the firſt and principal of theſe, and which includes all others, is that mentioned in our text, *viz.* the fear of God; *The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the ſnares of death.* I ſhall here,

I. Conſider and explain the fear of the Lord.

II. Shew the benefit, advantage and neceſſity of that principle, in its being *a fountain of life, to depart from the ſnares of death.*

SERM. I.

I. I am to consider and explain the fear of the Lord. *The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life*, &c.

By the fear of the Lord we are sometimes to understand the whole of religion and virtue; and some particular parts of it are sometimes to be understood hereby, the cause being put for the effect; as religion and righteousness are the effect of, or flow from the true fear of God. Thus, *Psal.* xxxiv. 11, &c. *Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you* the fear of the Lord. *What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and* do good; *seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the* righteous, *&c.* So that the *fear of the Lord* which the Psalmist would teach men, was to be righteous, to depart from all evil, and to do good; as this was the proper, natural, and genuine effect of the true fear of God. And so we may understand it in our text, that the sincere practice of religion and righteousness in all its parts, which flows from the fear of God, *is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death*; or that the sincere practice of virtue will preserve men from misery and death, and lead them to life and happiness. But I would chuse here to understand the principle itself, of *the fear of God*, and in that view to treat of it; which indeed makes no

SERM. I. material alteration in the ſenſe of our text: For to ſay that religion and righteouſneſs, or the avoiding evil and doing good, which are the effect of the fear of the Lord, preſerve men from miſery and death, and lead them to life and happineſs, is much the ſame as to ſay, that the true fear of God in the heart, as it preſerves men from ſin, and diſpoſes them to the ſincere practice of righteouſneſs, is itſelf, by this means, *a fountain of life to depart from the ſnares of death.*

This principle then, *viz. The fear of the Lord*, is an awful and reverential reſpect and regard to God, according to his moſt excellent nature and perfections, and the relation we ſtand in to him; it is a fixed and habitual reverence of him in our hearts, as the firſt, ſupreme and eternal being, who is ſelf-exiſtent and independent, from everlaſting to everlaſting, who gives being to all perſons and things, and by whom they all ſubſiſt and are ſuſtained and preſerved, who himſelf poſſeſſes all poſſible perfections, and is the ſupreme author, and firſt cauſe of whatſoever has exiſted, or does, or ſhall exiſt: And as the divine perfections do infinitely tranſcend the powers of any creature, or of all creatures put together, ſo they who truly fear God, have a greater awe and reverence of him than of any, or all beings beſides. I ſhall here a little ſpeak to thoſe perfections which render God the juſt object of our fear

and reverence, or consider under what characters they who truly fear him do more especially regard him, *viz.* as an almighty, omniscient, most holy, just and good being. SERM. I.

1. They who truly fear God regard him as an omnipotent or almighty being, and fear him, or have an awful reverence of him from that consideration; that he has all power, and can do whatsoever he pleases; that it is in vain for any one to resist him, there being no wisdom, or understanding, or counsel, or power that can be of the least effect against him; that no one can ever harden himself against him and prosper, and that his enemies who will not submit to him, shall one time or other be forced by his terrible judgments to submit to him. Thus the *Psalmist* says, *How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee*, Psal. lxvi. 3. and, *v.* 7. *He ruleth by his power for ever, his eyes behold the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themselves.*

The omnipotence of God, or his almighty power, sufficiently appears by his works: His *eternal power* and godhead may be understood by the things that are made; which they who truly fear him do seriously consider, and are from thence induced to retain in their hearts, and express in their conduct the highest reverence of him: They consider, that he who made the heavens and the earth,

SERM. I. and all things therein by his almighty power, can by the same power strike offenders dead, and whenever he pleases, can execute his just judgments upon them for their sins. The power of God, as it appears in his works, is often in scripture urged as a sufficient argument to induce men to fear him. Thus, *Jer.* v. 22. Fear *ye not me, saith the Lord? will ye not tremble at my presence, who have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it*, &c. And, *Psal.* xcvi. 4, 5. *The Lord is great, and greatly to be praised; he is to be* feared *above all gods: for all the gods of the nations are idols; but the Lord* made the heavens. And again in that beautiful passage, *Psal.* lxxxix. 6.—13. *Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints; and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. O Lord, God of hosts, who is a* strong *Lord like unto thee, or to thy faithful round about thee? thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them. Thou hast broken* Rahab *in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy* strong *arm. The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine; as for the world, and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them; the north and the south thou hast created them:* Tabor *and* Hermon *shall rejoice in thy Name. Thou hast a* mighty

mighty *arm*; ſtrong *is thy hand, and* high *is thy right-hand.* Certainly ſo great, powerful and almighty a being ought greatly to be feared; and they who truly fear him, do fear and reverence him, and have regard unto him, as ſuch an one; agreeably to our Saviour's exhortation to his diſciples, *Mat.* x. 28. *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul: but rather fear him who is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell.* SERM. I.

2. They who truly fear the Lord, have their minds impreſſed with an awful ſenſe of his omniſcience, and regard him as a being who knows all things, is acquainted with all our ways, with all our words and actions, and ſees into the moſt ſecret thoughts and deſigns of all hearts. God is every where preſent, all things are naked and bare before his eyes, with whom we have to do, and not the moſt ſecret thing can eſcape his knowledge: He is as perfectly acquainted with us as we are with ourſelves, and it is a moſt fooliſh and vain thing to think that even the moſt ſecret workings of our minds can be hid or concealed from him. All this is moſt elegantly and truly ſet forth in *Pſal.* cxxxix. 1.—12. *Lord, thou haſt ſearched me, and known me: thou knoweſt my down-ſitting and mine up-riſing; thou underſtandeſt my thought afar off; thou compaſſeſt my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue,*

SERM. I. *but lo, O Lord, thou knoweſt it altogether. Thou haſt beſet me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit? or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence? if I aſcend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the ſea; even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me. If I ſay, ſurely the darkneſs ſhall cover me; even the night ſhall be light about me. Yea, the darkneſs hideth not from thee; but the night ſhineth as the day: the darkneſs and the light are both alike to thee.* Now, as ſuch an omniſcient, all-ſeeing and heart-ſearching God ought greatly to be feared, ſo they who truly fear him, do ſeriouſly regard him as ſuch a one; they conſider him as one who ſearches the hearts and tries the reins, even to give every one according to his works, and according to the fruit of his doings; that the darkeſt coverts, and the moſt ſecret retreats for the commiſſion of ſin, cannot eſcape his cognizance, and that there is no deceiving or mocking of him, no eluding his penetration, or impoſing upon his all-ſeeing eye. Theſe thoughts make a ſolid impreſſion upon their ſpirits, and ſuitably affect their hearts.

3. They

3. They who truly fear God, do regard him as the moſt holy being, as a being of the moſt perfect rectitude, who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on ſin with the leaſt allowance or approbation; but, on the contrary, has a moſt perfect hatred of ſin, and bears the utmoſt, the moſt irreconcileable averſion to it. He is holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works; he is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all: He is righteous and loves righteouſneſs, and no iniquity can ever dwell with him. *Who therefore ſhall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy Name, for thou only art holy*, Rev. xv. 4. And as God is on this account likewiſe greatly to be feared, becauſe he is ſuch an holy being, ſo the true fear of him implies a regard to him as ſuch an one.

4. His juſtice in puniſhing ſinners, is another conſideration, that impreſſes the minds of thoſe that fear him, and makes them have an awe and reverence of him. They conſider that he is, and will be juſt, in condemning the wicked, as well as faithful in rewarding the righteous; that as he is a holy being and hates ſin and diſorder, ſo he is a juſt being and will puniſh it: That as he always does what is juſt and fit and right, ſo, as it is juſt and fit that impenitent ſinners ſhould be puniſhed, he will undoubtedly puniſh them. Hence they fear his threatnings

SERM. I. nings and his judgments, and ſtand in awe of his Majeſty. Indeed, if there was nothing but ſtrict juſtice in the divine being, without any mixture of mercy, he would not be that amiable being as he certainly is: But there is a harmony in all the divine attributes; his juſtice and his mercy are perfectly conſiſtent: If it be fit for an all-wiſe being to ſhew mercy upon any one, he will ſhew mercy; and if it be fit for him to puniſh, he will puniſh: We are ſure, that as God is an all-wiſe being, he does not act arbitrarily, or by ſovereign will and pleaſure alone, without any reaſon: He undoubtedly acts according to the *higheſt* reaſon, and does nothing contrary to, or without reaſon; though we cannot always pretend to ſee the reaſon of his proceedings, which will be fully manifeſted at laſt. But as we are endued with ſome degree of reaſon, ſo we are capable of judging of the reaſonableneſs of many things; and among the reſt, we may be ſure, that it is highly reaſonable, that they who go on without repentance, in the wilful tranſgreſſion of God's laws, or in acting unreaſonably or wickedly, ſhould be puniſhed at laſt; and ſo we may be ſure they will be puniſhed, as the word of God ſufficiently declares in thoſe many threatnings of miſery and eternal deſtruction to wilful and impenitent ſinners. Now, this being the caſe, God being

being thus juſt in puniſhing ſin, the fear of him muſt imply our duly and ſeriouſly regarding him as ſuch an one. SERM. I.

5. As the true fear of God, which his ſervants are poſſeſſed of, is not a ſlaviſh fear, but an ingenuous, free, rational, and filial fear, ſo it muſt include the conſidering him as a *perfectly good* being, from whom they receive all the good they enjoy, and from whoſe hand muſt come all the good things they hope for: If he was only almighty, omniſcient, and the like, he might be the object of our dread; but as he is at the ſame time good, and kind and merciful, the conſideration of this, joined with his other attributes, muſt render him the object of a truly ingenuous fear. This is ſufficiently intimated in many places of ſcripture, as *Jer.* v. 24. *Neither ſay they in their hearts; let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter in his ſeaſon; he reſerveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harveſt.* Here you ſee the good providence of God in taking care of his creatures, is ſuppoſed to be a proper ground of fearing him, *i. e.* having a reverential and grateful regard to him. And in *Pſal.* cxxx. 4. his goodneſs in pardoning the ſins of the ſincerely penitent is made to be the main ground of this truly religious fear of him: *But there is* forgiveneſs *with thee, that thou mayſt be* feared. If God was an inexorable being

SERM. I. being, who refused to pardon the sins of those who sincerely desire to repent of them and forsake them, we might be filled with perpetual horror and terror, but could not have an ingenuous and truly laudable fear of him; this nothing but the consideration of his goodness, joined with his other perfections, can create in us. And where there is such a fear and reverence arising from the consideration of his goodness, persons will be exceeding cautious of offending him, and most desirous and studious to please him, least they should prove ungrateful to their best friend and benefactor, and should expose themselves unless they repent, to his more severe displeasure, and a heavier condemnation, for abusing and slighting his exceeding great grace and goodness.

But, 2*dly*, As a sense of the divine perfections, so a sense of the relation that there is between God and us, does also impress the minds of those who truly fear and reverence him. Thus they consider him, as their great creator, and themselves as his creatures, who receive their being from him, and in him continually *live and move and have their being*. They reverence him as the author and first cause of all things, who has fearfully and wonderfully made us all, and is the God of the spirits of all flesh. Again, they consider him as their constant preserver who upholds our souls in life, supports them and

and ſuſtains them by his good providence, and by his influence, continues them in being. They alſo conſider him as the great orderer and diſpoſer of all things, who can do with them, and for them, as it ſeemeth good in his ſight: And as their ſupreme and rightful governor and lawgiver, who has the moſt juſt and rightful authority over them, and is able to ſave or to deſtroy, according as they obey or diſobey his equitable laws. Hence they tremble at his word, and ſtand in awe of it, as the Pſalmiſt did, *Pſal.* cxix. 161. *My heart ſtandeth in awe of thy word.* Finally, they conſider him as their great and almighty and impartial judge, who will righteouſly diſpenſe rewards to the good, and puniſhments to the bad, and who has all power to bring men before his impartial tribunal, and to execute upon them whatever his juſt judgment ſhall determine. The Apoſtle *Peter* exhorts the chriſtians to fear from this very conſideration, 1 *Ep.* i. 17. *And if ye call on the Father, who without reſpect of perſons judgeth according to every man's work, paſs the time of your ſojourning here in fear.* Now ſuch conſiderations as theſe do *prevail* in the minds of all thoſe who truly fear God: They regard him and reverence him as almighty, as all-knowing, as moſt holy, juſt and good; and as their creator, preſerver, governor, lawgiver and judge. They not only know and are convinced

SERM. I.

SERM. I. vinced that these glorious perfections belong to God, and that he is thus related to them; but they so seriously consider these things, as that they make deep and lasting impressions on their minds, whereby they gain a fixed and habitual reverence of God in their hearts, which prevails over all other considerations, and duly influences their conduct.

This then is *the fear of the Lord*, which *is* as *a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death.* Which happy advantages of this principle, I shall consider in my next discourse.

SER-

SERMON II.

The Fear of GOD, a fundamental Duty.

PROV. xiv. 27.

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the ſnares of death.

IN treating on theſe words, I propoſed, SERM. II.

I. To conſider and explain the fear of the Lord.

II. To ſhew the benefit, advantage, and neceſſity of this principle, in its being *a fountain of life to depart from the ſnares of death.*

The firſt of theſe was the ſubject of my former diſcourſe; in which I obſerved, that by the fear of the Lord, we are ſometimes to underſtand religion, virtue, and righteouſneſs, as flowing from thence. Thus the Pſalmiſt ſays, *Come ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord,* and ſhews, in the following words, that

SERM. II. that this fear of the Lord was to depart from evil and do good, *&c.* But I chose to treat here of the principle itself, or the fear of the Lord as seated in the heart, from whence the practice of righteousness does proceed. This fear of God, is an aweful and reverential respect and regard to him, according to his most excellent nature and glorious perfections, and the relations he stands in to us. It is a fixed, a habitual reverence of him, as the first supreme, self-existent, independent, and eternal being, and as possessing all possible perfections, some of these perfections which render God the object of our religious fear and reverence, I insisted more particularly upon; and shewed, that they who truly fear him, do consider and regard him as an omnipotent almighty being, who has all power in himself, and can do whatsoever he pleases; as an omniscient being, who knows all things, is acquainted with all our ways, with all our words and actions, and with the most secret thoughts and designs of our hearts; who being every way present, has all things naked and open before him, and nothing hid from him; as is most beautifully declared, *Psal.* cxxxix. beginning. Again, they fear and reverence him, as a most holy, just and righteous being, as a being of perfect rectitude, who hates all sin, vice and disorder, and will assuredly punish it, as he has most justly threatned; as he loves righteousness, and will

will assuredly reward it according to his gracious promises. And so they who fear God regard him also as a Being perfectly good, with whom there is forgiveness that he may be feared; and the consideration of this, with the other perfections, creates in them not a servile fear, dread, and horror, but an ingenuous filial fear and reverence, which fills their minds with the most agreeable sensations, and sweetly inclines and attracts them to the practice of virtue and righteousness. SERM. II.

I then mentioned some of those relations between God and us, which those who truly fear him, are possessed with a due and lively sense of, and fear him upon those considerations; such as his being our great Creator from whom we receive our being, our kind and constant preserver by whom we are continued in existence; our supreme and rightful governor and lawgiver; and our just and impartial judge. They who truly fear God, do not only know that he is possessed of these perfections, and stands in these relations to us; but are impressed with a strong and lively sense thereof: They so seriously consider these things that they make deep and lasting impressions upon their minds, whereby they gain a fixed and habitual principle of the fear of God in their hearts, which prevails over all other considerations, and duly influences their conduct.

SERM. II. In this manner I more largely considered and explained this principle, the fear of the Lord; and come now,

2*dly*, To treat of the unspeakable benefit, and advantage, and indeed, necessity of it, from what is said of it in our text; *it is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*

The plain sense of which words is in general this, that the fear of the Lord is the source, original, or cause of those things, or leads to the practice of those things which tend to life, and preserves from those things which tend to death.

And, 1*st*, Let us consider how the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, or leads to those things which tend to life. This it must do; inasmuch as where this principle is in truth and sincerity, it inspires men with an ardent desire, and puts them upon diligently endeavouring to do those things that please that most excellent and glorious being whom they fear, in order to their being approved and accepted of him; and as they know that they cannot be approved of God without the practice of righteousness and true goodness, they will take care to practice those in sincerity, or to keep God's commandments wherein righteousness and virtue are enjoined. Hence these things are frequently in scripture joined with the fear of God, to shew that they proceed from it, or

are the genuine effects of it; as *Eccles.* xii. 13. *Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.* And *Acts* x. 35. *He that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.* But more particularly, that the fear of the Lord tendeth to life, or leads to those things, which tend to life, appears, SERM. II.

1. In that it will put men upon acting according to reason, and the dignity of their nature, which they have received from God: He that fears God does not look upon himself to be his own, but to be his Creator's who, he is sensible, has a just propriety in him, and right over him; and as he knows he received all his powers and faculties from him, and depends continually on him for the continuance of them, and that he is accountable to his great Creator for the use or abuse of them, he will take care to use them to the ends for which they were given, and to glorify God in his body, and in his spirit, which are his, in the sincere practice of righteousness and piety, presenting his body unto him a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to him, and yielding his members instruments of righteousness unto holiness. The wicked are represented, *Psal.* xii. 4. as saying, *With our tongue will we prevail, our lips are our own, who is Lord over us? These have no fear of God before their eyes:* But on the other hand, the righteous who fear God, look up-

SERM. II. on their body and spirit and tongue, and all their members, powers and faculties not to be their own, so as to use them as they list, but to be the Lord's, their great maker and preserver, to be used for the ends for which he gave them, *viz.* in conformity to the rules of righteousness, piety, charity, and temperance, which he has prescribed.

2. The true fear of God will put men upon acting right in every condition and relation that they are placed in by providence. He who fears God, regards his providence, and considers him as the great governor of the world, as the supreme orderer of his creatures, and as the wise dispoſer of all events; and whilst he is thus persuaded, and is duly sensible hereof he will acknowledge God's hand in every station of life he passes through, and will be disposed to behave himself agreeably to it, or to discharge the duties that such a station requires. He will look upon himself as made by God a member of the great body of mankind; and as such will endeavour to do justly, and in his station to be a good member of society. He will look upon the relations he may sustain of husband, father, son and brother, master or servant, and the like, to be the effect of that wise constitution of things, which God has settled; and so will endeavour, in obedience to his Creator whom he fears, to discharge the duties of those seve-

ral relations. If he be in adverſity, he will be contented and humble himſelf under the mighty hand of God; and if he enjoys proſperity, he will be thankful to God for it, and will have ſuch a ſenſe of the duties of that ſtation, that he will honour the Lord with his ſubſtance, and will be rich in good works towards them that are in want, conſidering, that *He that oppreſſeth the poor, reproacheth his maker; but he that honoureth his maker, hath mercy on the poor*; as *v.* 31 of this chapter, where our text is. SERM. II.

3. The true fear of God will put men upon enquiring after every ſignification of his will, and yielding obedience to it. Thus it will make them reverence the word of God, which contains the revelation of his will; it will diſpoſe and incline them to ſtudy this word, that they may know what God requires of them; to practice real religion and virtue in all its parts, which that word enjoins; and to make uſe of all thoſe means that are therein preſcribed for keeping up and increaſing the life of religion in them; thus they will conſcientiouſly worſhip God publickly and privately, and by that means will be more and more diſpoſed and inclined to every other part of their duty.

Now by theſe means is the *fear of the Lord a fountain of life*; as it puts us upon

SERM. II. acting according to the dignity of our nature, the conditions and relations we are placed in, and the precepts of the divine word; for if we thus act, we shall act righteously; and *in the way of righteousness is life, and in the path-way thereof there is no death*, Prov. xii. 28. Now this life, which the fear of God tends to, by leading us in the way of righteousness, may be considered in three respects.

1. It tends to health and life in a proper sense here. Not that the most righteous can expect to live for ever here, or that every righteous man shall out-live every wicked man: We are not thus to strain this matter; but the meaning is, that a virtuous conduct, which is the effect of the fear of God, has a natural tendency *to secure our health and life, so long as it shall please God to continue them unto us*, in that it secures us from many things which tend to hurt our health, and to shorten our days; as will be more fully considered when we come to speak of *the snares of death*. *A sound heart*, says *Solomon, is the life of the flesh*, v. 30. of the chapter, where our text is: And again, *ch.* x. 27. *The fear of the Lord prolongeth days.*

2. The fear of the Lord undoubtedly tends to life in a moral or spiritual sense: For the work of righteousness, which it leads to, is peace, and causes the greatest comfort and joy in our minds, the greatest serenity and

and ſatisfaction. They who truly fear God may hope in him and truſt in him; and hope and truſt in God, will cauſe the moſt deſirable calmneſs of mind even in outward troubles, and will make us rejoice even in tribulations. Though the righteous who fear God cannot live for ever, yet they have hope in their death. For, SERM. II.

3. The fear of God tends to life eternal in the world to come, which is fully revealed in the goſpel of Chriſt. True piety and righteouſneſs the effect of the fear of God, naturally tends to peace and happineſs, ſuppoſing a future ſtate: *To be ſpiritually minded is life and peace.* And this future ſtate is plainly diſcovered and repeatedly promiſed in the goſpel, which is declared to be an everlaſting ſtate. *To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory, honour, and immortality*, as they who truly fear God do, he will graciouſly give eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Thus have we conſidered the fear of the Lord, as it is a fountain of life; which will more fully appear if we conſider,

2*dly*, How it preſerves from the ſnares of death. *The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the ſnares of death.*

The ſnares of death are ſin and vice, impiety, injuſtice and intemperance, or whatever leads to them. Theſe bring men,

SERM. II.

1. To death in a proper ſenſe oftentimes in this life, either inflicted by the civil magiſtrate, who for the good of the community is appointed of God to be *a terror to evil doers*, or occaſioned in a natural way, as diſeaſes and death are the natural conſequences of ſome vices. Of both theſe, we have too many ſad inſtances. How many do we ſee, that by the practice of vice bring themſelves to an untimely violent death by the hand of publick juſtice? And how many are there that, by intemperance and exceſs of various kinds, bring incurable diſeaſes and death upon themſelves? Of the former kind we may ſuppoſe the Pſalmiſt to ſpeak, *Pſal.* lv. 23. *Bloody and deceitful men ſhall not live out half their days.* And of both kinds we may underſtand the words of the wiſe man in that forecited *Prov.* x. 27. *The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked ſhall be ſhortened.*

2. Sin and vice always occaſion death in a moral ſenſe; whence perſons immerſed in vice are ſaid to *be dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.* And when our Saviour ſays, *Let the dead bury their dead*, he means, let thoſe who are morally or ſpiritually dead, bury their friends who are naturally dead. By this death, in a moral ſenſe, I underſtand either that ſtupidity, ſenſeleſſneſs and ſunk ſtate, or that trouble, anguiſh, guilt, fear and confuſion of mind, which are occaſioned by ſin and vice: Thus

the

the wicked have either *their conſciences ſeared*, as it were, *with a hot iron*, or *are like the troubled ſea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt*, and there is no peace unto them. SERM. II.

3. Sin and vice will certainly bring upon men the ſecond death in the world to come. They naturally tend to unhappineſs and miſery, ſuppoſing a future ſtate; *to be carnally minded is death:* And this future ſtate of the wicked is plainly threatened in the goſpel, wherein we are aſſured, that *the wicked ſhall periſh*, and that *they ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction*, and that they who *live after the fleſh ſhall die.*

Thus have we conſidered how ſin and vice are the ſnares of death; and come now,

2. To conſider how the fear of the Lord tends to preſerve men from them.

1. It does this, inaſmuch as it is a conſtant check upon our paſſions and appetites. Theſe, though good in themſelves when under the conduct of reaſon, and given us for wiſe ends, and ſuited to our preſent ſtate, yet muſt be acknowledged to be the ſource of all the diſorders that are in the moral world, when they are either placed upon undue objects, or run out into exceſs; both which are moſt likely to be prevented by the true fear of God, for that will make us conſider ourſelves ſo under the government and authority of the Almighty, as that we ſhall

SERM. II. shall be justly afraid of indulging our appetites and passions in those instances which he has forbidden, or to any excess which is in itself unlawful.

2. The fear of God tends to preserve us from those temptations which arise from the different states of prosperity and adversity. The temptations arising from these are very great; which *Agur* was so sensible of, that he prayed against them both, *Prov.* xxx. 8, 9.—*Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.* And *Solomon* says, *The prosperity of fools shall destroy them*, Prov. i. 32. The rich are apt to be proud, and covetous, and sensual, and oppressive; and the poor are exposed to many temptations; but the true fear of the Lord will preserve them both from those follies, irregularities and vices that are so incident to their different states: So that the rich man who fears God will be humble, and temperate, and charitable, considering himself only as a steward intrusted with a talent which he must give an account of to his great Lord and Master. And the poor man who fears God will be patient, and contented, and resigned to the will of God, and will take care to avoid those irregularities which those of his station are so exceedingly prone to.

3. The

3. The fear of the Lord will preſerve men from the ill effects of bad company, and from the evil advice and ſollicitations of wicked men. He who truly fears God will avoid bad company as much as poſſible, knowing of what a pernicious nature it is; and will be rather a companion of all them that fear the Lord, as *David* ſays he was, *Pſal.* cxix. 63. *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.* And if he ſhould happen, thro' neceſſity, or otherwiſe, to be caſt among bad company, the true fear of God will be a ſovereign preſervative from the bad effects of their example, their advice or ſollicitations. Such an one will not walk in the counſel of the ungodly, and if ſinners entice him, he will not conſent; according to *Solomon*'s advice, *Prov.* i. 10.—15. *My ſon, if ſinners entice thee, conſent thou not. If they ſay, come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cauſe: Let us ſwallow them up alive as the grave, and whole as thoſe that go down into the pit: We ſhall find all precious ſubſtance, we ſhall fill our houſes with ſpoil: Caſt in thy lot among us, let us all have one purſe. My ſon, walk not thou in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their path.* And as to wicked ſollicitations, ſee how *Joſeph*, by means of the fear of God, was enabled to reſiſt them, when he ſaid to his miſtreſs, SERM. II.

SERM. II. treſs, *How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* Gen. xxxix. 9.

4. To this we may add, that the fear of God preſerves from the temptations that ariſe from cuſtom and general practice, or from faſhionable vices. If we could ſuppoſe any one vice to obtain as a faſhion or cuſtom all the world over, he who fears God, being ſenſible it is a vice, would in that inſtance dare to be entirely ſingular. Great numbers of examples are apt to have great influence; but he who truly fears God will not follow a multitude to do evil. When *Nehemiah* had the example of all the governors that went before him, who enriched themſelves by oppreſſing the people, he ſaid, *But this did not I, becauſe of the fear of God*, Neh. v. 15.

5. The fear of the Lord preſerves from the temptations that ariſe from the fear of men. *The fear of man*, ſays *Solomon*, *bringeth a ſnare*, Prov. xxix. 25. But from this ſnare does the fear of God ſecure us: So that if our hearts are truly poſſeſſed of this fear, neither the deſires, nor commands, nor threats of our ſuperiors will be of any weight with us, if they be contrary to the commands of God: We ſhall rather chuſe to diſpleaſe all men than to diſpleaſe him; yea we ſhall chuſe rather to ſuffer any thing from men than to offend or ſin againſt God; according to our Saviour's command, *Fear not them*

who

who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell, Matt. x. 28. And St. *Peter*'s 1st Ep. iii. 14, 15.—*Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.* Thus have we seen how the fear of the Lord preserves from the snares of death, by preserving us from the temptations that arise from our own passions and appetites, from the different states of prosperity and adversity, from the example, advice and sollicitations of wicked men, from custom and general practice, and from the fear of men. And that it thus preserves from sin itself, is implied in several places of scripture, where the avoiding sin is represented as the effect of it; as *Psal.* iv. 4. *Stand in awe, and sin not.* Prov. iii. 7. *Fear the Lord, and depart from evil.* And, *chap.* xvi. 6. it is expressly said, that by *the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.*

Having thus seen the excellency of this principle, and how necessary and effectual it is to preserve us from sin and death, and to lead us to righteousness and life, I shall conclude, by earnestly exhorting you to cultivate this principle in yourselves and others. If you have been careless and superficial in this matter, it is high time now to attend to those considerations that may give you a settled and habitual reverence for your great

SERM. II. great Creator; for on this depends your true comfort here, and happineſs hereafter. And if you have attained to this happy frame of mind, and your hearts are poſſeſſed with this ſalutary principle, do you labour to improve it and preſerve it. To this end often meditate on the divine power, ſovereignty, juſtice and goodneſs, and on the relation you ſtand in to the divine Being, as your creator, your preſerver, your rightful Lord and governor, and your judge and final rewarder, that ſo you may ſtand in awe of him and ſin not. Will you not be afraid to offend an all-powerful, all-knowing, holy and juſt God; yea will you not have a generous fear of offending him who is the chief good, and who has manifeſted his goodneſs to you in various and even innumerable inſtances, and particularly in the redemption wrought out for you by Jeſus Chriſt. And as you ſhould labour to cultivate this moſt excellent principle of the fear of God in yourſelves, ſo you ſhould labour to implant it and improve it in others, as you ſhould ſeek the good and welfare of others as well as your own. Particularly, labour to inſtil this principle in your children, or any that you are immediately concerned for. Would you have your children be preſerved from the temptations of an evil world, endeavour then betimes to teach them the fear of the Lord, and that will preſerve them. Would you have them enjoy comfort in their minds

minds here, and eternal happineſs hereafter, then labour to poſſeſs their minds with the fear of God, that they may remember their Creator in the days of their youth, and may fear to ſin againſt him. This in all likelihood will be a ſolid and abiding principle of virtue in them, and will preſerve them from the dangerous and deſtructive paths of vice; when matters of mere ſpeculation and doubtful diſputation in religion will ſerve for little elſe than to confound them; but the true fear of God is a ſolid and rational thing, and will be to all who are poſſeſſed of it, *a fountain of life, to depart from the ſnares of death.*

SER-

SERMON III.

The Love of GOD insured by Righteousness.

PSAL. cxlvi. 8. lat. part.

The LORD loveth the righteous.

SERM. III.

ALL men are naturally desirous of happiness, and thereupon are constantly seeking after it, and labouring to have it in their possession, and pursuing those methods for the obtaining of it, which, according to the notions they have of it, seem likely to bring them to the enjoyment of it; but the misery of it is, that a great part of mankind have entertained wrong notions of felicity, and consequently take the wrong way to attain to so desirable a possession, and so delude and deceive themselves, and instead of true felicity, gain only real misery in the end. They place happiness in the gratification of their passions, in sensual delights and pleasures, in riches or honours, or carnal, and even sinful enjoyments, and hence their whole time and study are employed in contriving

triving how to get these things into their possession, which are so far from yielding true happiness, that they are frequently and most commonly attended with, or followed by pain and anxiety, and uneasiness of mind; or however, the enjoyment of them being uncertain, and at best but short, they must needs be far from conferring true and perfect felicity. Whatever any one chiefly, and above all other things, desires the enjoyment of, in that he places his happiness; which if it be any earthly object, it will miserably deceive him, and come vastly short of affording him real felicity. Where then shall we rest? where shall we find such perfect and constant satisfaction and tranquillity of mind, as constitutes true happiness? Truly no where, but in our Creator himself. It is only God that can fill our minds with real and substantial joy and pleasure and satisfaction, and in whom we can thoroughly acquiesce; and consequently, it is he alone, that can make us truly happy. All pleasures and enjoyments short of him, are but so many transitory delusions and vain appearances of felicity, which, if we chuse not God for our supreme happiness, will in the end, but leave us so much more miserable, uneasy and unsatisfied. Whatever mistaken notions many have entertained, who are guided by the heat of their passions, and not by reason; true happiness is

SERM. III.

SERM. III. no where to be found but in God himſelf, and that in the enjoyment of his love and favour and bleſſing, and the like; hence the Pſalmiſt tells us, *In favour is life*, Pſal. xxx. 5. And again, *his loving-kindneſs is better than life*, Pſal. lxiii. 3. and he frequently extols the happineſs and bleſſedneſs of them whoſe hope is in the Lord, whoſe expectation is from him, and who have him for their God. Thus in this Pſalm, after having reſolved to praiſe God as long as he lived, and having expoſed the vanity of truſting in man, and expecting help or ſuccour from any thing ſhort of the divine favour, he breaks out into exultation at the happineſs of thoſe who make God their truſt, ver. 5. *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, and whoſe hope is in the Lord his God*; and he enlarges on this happineſs, from the conſideration of God's power and works, his faithfulneſs and truth, and his mercy, ſhewed to men in their various afflictions, ver. 6, 7, 8. *Which made heaven and earth, the ſea and all therein is: which keepeth truth for ever, which executeth judgment for the oppreſſed, which giveth food to the hungry: The Lord looſeth the priſoners, the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind, the Lord raiſeth them that are bowed down*; and ver. 9. *The Lord preſerveth the ſtrangers, he relieveth the fatherleſs and widow.* Certainly he muſt be happy, who has this God, ſo powerful,

and righteous, and merciful a being for his portion. Now, as true happiness is no where to be had but in God, in his love and favour, so the only way to obtain this felicity is by being righteous, by sincerely addicting ourselves to the practice of righteousness and holiness, which alone is well pleasing to God: And therefore, as the happiness of those whom God loves and favours is frequently extolled in scripture, so it is the righteous who are ever said to enjoy this blessedness. And thus in our text, that we might know who are those truly happy persons who are interested in the divine love and favour, the Psalmist adds, *The Lord loveth the righteous.* 'Tis the righteous who possess this happiness. SERM. III.

Now, in treating on these words, I shall,

I. Consider who are those righteous persons whom the Lord, Jehovah, is said to love.

II. What we are to understand by his loving them, or what this expression includes.

III. How it appears that *the Lord* thus *loveth the righteous.*

I. Who are those righteous persons whom the Lord loveth?

Now, it is certain that none are perfectly righteous, for we are all sinners in some de-

SERM. III. gree or other, in some instance or other, *we have all sinned*, as the Apostle says, *and come short of the glory of God*; and in this sense the wise man's observation holds good, *Eccl.* vii. 20. *There is not a just man upon earth, who doeth good, and sinneth not.* By the righteous therefore we are to understand, such whose disposition is agreeable to the will of God, and the general course and tenour of whose actions is conformable thereunto, who will and desire that which is well pleasing to God, and sincerely endeavour to practise accordingly; it is necessary that our minds be rightly disposed for holiness, and that we have a sincere love to, and desire after righteousness for its own excellency, and because well pleasing to God, if we would practise it as we ought, *viz.* sincerely, and would obtain the character of righteous persons; for in all our actions God chiefly regards the inward springs and motives of them; if therefore, from a right temper and disposition of mind we endeavour to obey his commandments, to live as he would have us, and to follow after holiness and righteousness, if we make his law the rule of our lives, and sincerely endeavour to conform ourselves thereto in every respect, (for 'tis necessary we should endeavour to obey all God's commandments) we are the righteous persons meant in the text, whom God loves. But more particularly, that we may know who are righteous, we may

may consider righteousness with respect to the rule of it, and to the objects of it. The rule of righteousness is in general the law of God, which law is expressed by the light of nature, and in divine revelation. 1. Those who are righteous, endeavour to conform themselves to the light of nature, to those natural notices they have, or may have, of virtue, and righteousness, and goodness, by the reflection of their own minds, and the use of the reason that God has endued them with, by the consideration of the several relations they stand in, and what is agreeable thereto. Thus many among the heathen, who had only the light of nature, and were under no other law than the law of their reason, many, I say, among these, sincerely endeavoured to live according to this law of their nature, tho' they had no positive revelation from God; tho' they had not *the law, they did by nature the things contained in the law*, and *were a law unto themselves:* And such as these are to be looked upon as righteous persons whom God loveth; for as the apostle *Peter* says, *In every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness*, (which he that sincerely endeavours to live according to the law of nature does) *is accepted with him*, Acts x. 35. 2. The divine revelation is another rule of righteousness to those that have it, and they are righteous who sincerely endeavour to live agreeably thereto. There

SERM. III.

SERM. III. are two revelations which God gave to men, one to a particular nation, or body of men, as the law of *Moſes*, or the old teſtament to the *Jews*, and the other promiſcuouſly to all men, as the goſpel, or new teſtament; and thoſe were ſaid to be righteous among the *Jews*, or under the old teſtament, who conformed to the law of *Moſes*, and to thoſe particular directions which God gave them from time to time by his prophets, who obeyed not only the precepts of morality contained in their law, but alſo the poſitive precepts thereof: Thus *Zechariah* and *Elizabeth* are ſaid to be *both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the law blameleſs*, Luke i. 6. And thoſe God accounts righteous under the goſpel, who, believing in his Son Jeſus Chriſt, ſubmit themſelves to his authority, and ſincerely comply with the precepts of the goſpel. Who are conformed to the new creation, *in righteouſneſs and true holineſs*; who keep the commandments of God, and have *that faith which worketh by love*; who not only obey the precepts of morality contained in the goſpel, but conform to the poſitive commands thereof, and ſo endeavour to *fulfil all righteouſneſs*. 3. We may conſider righteouſneſs with regard to the objects on which it is exerciſed. The word *Righteouſneſs* is uſed ſometimes in a ſtrict ſenſe, to denote juſtice and equity between man and man, and thoſe

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are said to be just and righteous who give every one his due: But here, by the righteous, we are to understand those who sincerely obey all God's commandments, with respect either to God immediately, ourselves, or our neighbour. *1st*, Those who are righteous, sincerely perform the duties that respect God immediately, or have due regard to his worship and immediate service. Righteous persons are religious persons; they maintain piety, and live a godly life; they love God with all their heart, and soul, and mind; they trust in him, and they fear him, and reverence his name and authority; they pay all homage and adoration to him, and ascribe to him all possible perfections; they pray constantly to him; they praise and magnify his name, and in every thing give thanks unto him; they *worship him in spirit and in truth*, and serve him with reverence and godly fear; they worship him privately and publickly, and still give glory to his name; they sincerely endeavour to obey his commandments, and direct all their actions to his glory. *2dly*, Those who are righteous, have always a due regard to the government of themselves; they observe what is agreeable to the dignity of their nature, and to the will of God; in this respect they live soberly in the world; they keep all their passions and appetites within due bounds; they maintain temperance and moderation in

SERM. III.

SERM. III. the use of all worldly enjoyments; they are humble, and modest, and patient, and contented; they avoid all excess, all unlawful gratifications, and manage themselves in all respects with holiness and sobriety. 3*dly*, Those who are righteous, conscientiously observe the duties they owe to their neighbour, or to all men; they render to every one his due, they give every one his own, and are just and equitable in all their dealings; they wrong none, defraud none, oppress none, but do to others as they would be dealt with themselves; and they are not only just and honest in their dealings, but they sincerely love all men; they love their neighbour as themselves, they desire his welfare, and endeavour by all means to promote it; they maintain charity for all men, and are ready on all occasions to do them good; they are merciful, and kind, and compassionate, and beneficient, ready, according to their ability, to administer suitable helps to every one. Thus charity and beneficence is sometimes called righteousness, as, 2 *Cor.* ix. 9. *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness remaineth for ever*, i. e. his bounty, liberality and munificence: So, *ver.* 10. *Now he that ministreth seed to the sower, doth minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness*, i. e. of your liberality. Thus we see who are the righteous, *viz.* those

thoſe who ſincerely endeavour to obey all God's commandments, and to perform the duties they owe to him, themſelves and their neighbour; and theſe, either ſuch as have made this the conſtant practice of their lives, or ſuch as after a courſe of ſin have ſincerely repented and turned to God, and ſo bring forth theſe fruits meet for repentance; both theſe come under the denomination of righteous perſons, and are ſuch as God loves. Both indeed are but imperfectly righteous, but their ſincerity, tho' imperfect, is graciouſly accepted thro' Jeſus Chriſt; ſo that they are treated as if they were perfectly righteous. SERM. III.

II. I come now in the ſecond place, to conſider what we are to underſtand by God's loving the righteous, or what is included in it.

1. Hereby we are to underſtand, that God approves, accepts of, and is well pleaſed with the righteous. Righteouſneſs is what he approves, and is agreeable to his will, conſequently he muſt like and approve of thoſe who make it the practice of their lives; as the practice is acceptable and well pleaſing to him, ſo thoſe who maintain it muſt neceſſarily be ſo too; *Rom.* xiv. 17, 18. *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt: for he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God.* The righteous have

SERM. III. have the divine acceptance and approbation; God reſpects them, and likes them, and takes delight and complacency in them, *Prov.* xi. 20. *Such as are upright in their way are his delight:* He eſteems them, and accounts them precious in his ſight; he juſtifies them, and pardons their ſins, and remits all their tranſgreſſions: The divine approbation ſuppoſes the pardon and remiſſion of ſins; the moſt righteous have need of this bleſſing, as having been guilty of ſin in ſome reſpect or other, and being ſtill liable to be overtaken in a fault; and God fails not to grant this favour through Jeſus Chriſt to every ſincere penitent, who makes righteouſneſs the main ſcope and deſign of his life. Thus, when *David* had declared the bleſſedneſs of him *whoſe tranſgreſſions are forgiven, whoſe ſin is covered, and to whom the Lord will not impute iniquity*, that we might know who is partaker of this bleſſing of remiſſion of ſins, he adds, *and in whoſe ſpirit there is no guile*, (no deceit or wickedneſs) 'tis ſuch a perſon that has his ſins forgiven, *Pſal.* xxxii. 1, 2. The divine approbation and acceptance of the righteous, includes alſo the approbation and acceptance of all their religious ſervices. *The wicked are an abomination to the Lord* when they tread his courts, but the ſincere worſhip of the righteous is grateful and acceptable to him; he is well pleaſed with their praiſe and thankſgivings, and

and graciously hears and answers their pray- SERM.
ers and supplications, 1 *Pet.* iii. 12. *The eyes* III.
of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears ⌣
are open unto their prayers. Prov. xv. 8. *The prayer of the upright is his delight.*

2*dly*, The love of God to the righteous, supposes that he favours and blesseth them, and does them good in every respect in this life; that he takes care of them; that he watches over them for good; that his kind providence attends them, and is engaged for them, and presides over all their affairs, to order them for the best. The care that God takes over the righteous is variously expressed in scripture. Thus, he *preserveth them, defendeth and keepeth them in all their ways*, he *is their shield, and their fortress, and their high tower*; his *name is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.* Psal. xxxvii. 28. *The Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever.* Psal. cxlv. 20. *The Lord preserveth all them that love him.* Prov. ii. 7, 8. *He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly: he keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.* So also he delivers them when they are in trouble and adversity, he rescues them from evil, and sets them at liberty from their affliction; this is expressed, *Psal.* xxxiv. 17. *The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.* And, *ver.* 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth*

SERM. III. *vereth them out of them all.* And, *Pſal* xxxvii. 39, 40. *The ſalvation of the righteous is of the Lord; he is their ſtrength in time of trouble, and the Lord ſhall help them, and deliver them; he ſhall deliver them from the wicked, and ſave them, becauſe they truſt in him.* He alſo provides for them, and ſupplies all their wants, he ſuffers not the righteous to want any good thing; *Prov.* x. 3. *The Lord will not ſuffer the ſoul of the righteous to famiſh.* And, *chap.* xiii. 25. *The righteous eateth to the ſatisfying of his ſoul.* And tho' many that are righteous may have leſs worldly ſubſtance than the wicked, yet they enjoy the bleſſing of God with it; and ſo a little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked. God alſo ſupports and ſtrengthens the righteous under all their infirmities; *Pſal.* xxxvii. 24. *Tho' he* (*i. e.* a good man) *fall, he ſhall not be utterly caſt down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.* And finally, he guides and directs them in all their ways, *he layeth up ſound wiſdom for the righteous*, as the wiſe Man ſays; and as the Pſalmiſt ſays, *The ſteps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.* Thus God favours and does good to the righteous in every reſpect; and his bleſſing and favour is manifeſted to them, not only in proſperity, but even in the midſt of afflictions and adverſity; when he chaſtiſeth them, and ſuffers trouble to come upon them, he does it out of love, and with a deſign to do them good;

good; and accordingly he maketh their afflictions, as well as every thing else, to work together for their good, for their real profit and advantage. *Rom.* viii. 28. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose.* But, SERM. III.

3. The love of God to the righteous, supposes a future reward of happiness and glory in the world to come to be conferred on them. This was indeed but obscurely hinted under the old testament, but in the gospel it is most clearly revealed, Jesus Christ having brought life and immortality to light. We are herein told of a glorious reward of eternal life and happiness to be given to the righteous, that they shall rise again to a blessed immortality, and enjoy eternal glory, honour and peace in heaven; that their natures shall be rectified, and perfectly restored; and that they shall have every thing that is good, excellent and desirable to enjoy, and that for ever; and finally, that they shall be eternally happy, and blessed in the enjoyment of the divine presence, in which *is fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.* Thus we see what is included in this expression, *The Lord loveth the righteous*, viz. that he approves, esteems, and is well pleased with them; that he delights in them, and justifies, and pardons, and accepts them; that he blesseth them, and taketh care of them in this life,

and

SERM. III. and maketh all things to work together for their good; and that he will confer on them eternal happineſs and glory in the world to come; and finally, give them the perpetual enjoyment of himſelf, beyond which nothing can be deſired or expected.

III. I come now in the third place, to conſider how it appears that *the Lord loveth the righteous.*

1. This is plain from the nature of things; God loveth righteouſneſs, and therefore loveth the righteous. Righteouſneſs is entirely agreeable to the nature of God, he is perfectly holy and righteous, and there is no unrighteouſneſs in him; he *is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works,* and therefore righteouſneſs, wherever it is found, muſt needs be grateful and well pleaſing to him, and conſequently he muſt love, and eſteem, and delight to bleſs and reward them who ſincerely maintain it: *The righteous Lord loveth righteouſneſs,* and therefore *his countenance does behold the upright*; and then, if we conſider that righteouſneſs is a conformity to the law of God, he muſt certainly be pleaſed with thoſe who ſincerely obey his law.

2. It appears that God loveth the righteous, from ſeveral and almoſt innumerable declarations of holy ſcripture, of his love, and favour, and good-will towards ſuch. The holy ſcriptures are the word of truth, the

the word of God himself, and therefore we may depend on what is therein asserted as to this matter. The several passages I have already quoted concerning God's preserving, delivering, upholding and blessing the righteous, are so many testimonies of his love to them; but I shall cite two or three more: *Gen.* xviii. latter end, *Abraham* is interceding with God for *Sodom*, and God, in answer to his queries, tells him first, *that if there were fifty righteous persons in* Sodom, *he would spare all the place for their sakes*; and then, *if there were but forty-five*, and so down to *ten*, *he would not destroy it for their sake*; which shews what a wonderful regard God has for the righteous. *Job* xxxvi. 7. it is said, *He* (*i. e.* God) *withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous* Psal. i. 6. *The Lord knoweth* (*i. e.* approveth) *the way of the righteous*. Psal. v. 12. *For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous, with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.* Isa. iii. 10. *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him.* Rom. ii. 7. *To them, who by patient continuance, in well-doing seek for glory, honour and immortality*, (God will render) *eternal life*. But to quote all the places wherein the favour of God is declared to the righteous, would be to transcribe a great part of the scriptures. Therefore, SERM. III.

3. It will appear that God loveth the righteous, if we consider the particular instances

SERM. III. ſtances of his favour ſhewn to ſuch; tho' there are many, very many examples in ſcripture of righteous perſons peculiarly favoured and bleſſed of God, I ſhall content myſelf with mentioning three or four remarkable ones. 1*ſt*, *Noah*, who was a juſt man, and perfect in his generation, and walked with God, to whom God ſaid, *Thee have I ſeen righteous before mè in this generation*; and whom the apoſtle *Peter* calls *a preacher of righteouſneſs*; was ſo beloved of God, and found ſuch favour in his eyes, that when a deluge was brought on the world of the ungodly, he and his family alone were preſerved. 2*dly*, *Lot*, whom the apoſtle *Peter* calls *juſt Lot*, and *that righteous man*, was ſo favour'd of God, the Lord was ſo merciful to him, that when he deſtroyed the wicked city where he dwelt, he ſent him away, and ſecured him. 3*dly*, *Shadrach*, *Meſhech*, and *Abednego*, who were the ſincere ſervants of God, tho' they were caſt into a burning fiery furnace for the ſake of true religion, by the peculiar favour and miraculous power of God, received no hurt. 4*thly*, *Daniel*, who was remarkable for his piety, temperance, and juſtice, when, thro' the malice of his enemies he was caſt into a den of lions, was miraculouſly preſerved by God, who ſent his angel and ſhut the lions mouths, ſo that he received no hurt. Thus it plainly appears that God *loveth the righteous*.

And

And now, having thus briefly conſidered theſe words, I ſhall conclude with a reflection or two on what has been ſaid. SERM. III.

1. We may here ſee the exceeding great happineſs of truly righteous perſons. They are beloved of God, and ſo are entitled to all manner of felicity. How happy muſt they be who are beloved of their Creator! of him who rules and governs all things! How bleſſed are they who are beloved of him who is omnipotent, who is all-wiſe, whoſe goodneſs is unbounded, and who keepeth truth for ever; who never wants power, nor ſkill, nor will to help them, and do them good! The love of God carries in it all manner of happineſs: Thoſe whom God loves are approved and accepted of him, and have their ſins forgiven; thoſe whom God loves are favoured and bleſſed in every reſpect by him here, and have the reward of eternal glory conferred on them in the world to come. Finally, thoſe whom God loves have him for their portion, for their God, and he will be their exceeding great reward; and the righteous being the perſons whom God loves, are thus inexpreſſibly happy. Well therefore might the Pſalmiſt ſay, *Bleſſed are the undefiled in the way: who walk in the law of the Lord. Bleſſed are they that keep his teſtimonies, and that ſeek him with the whole heart.*

2. Let us reflect a little on the miſery of the wicked. As the righteous are beloved

SERM. III.

of God, so they only are; *for the wicked, and him that doeth violence, his soul hateth*; not that he hateth any as they are his creatures for any natural infirmities, but only as having revolted from him and goodness. As wickedness is contrary to righteousness, so the wicked will meet with the quite contrary treatment from the hands of God to what the righteous shall meet with: God disapproves and is displeased with the wicked; they are under the guilt of their transgressions, and their prayers, and whatever service they perform to God, will be rejected with indignation; whilst they continue in a sinful course, their very prayers are an abomination. And then the wicked have no title to the divine blessing on their affairs in this life; and will be so far from being happy in the favour of God, in the world to come, that they shall be miserably banished from his presence, and sentenced to punishment and everlasting destruction. The wicked have God for their enemy; and how unhappy must they be who have their Creator against them, in whose favour alone true happiness is to be found? But then, by the wicked, we are to understand such as obstinately continue in wicked courses, not such as sincerely repent, nor those, the general bent of whose disposition and behaviour is right, tho' attended with many weaknesses and imperfections, many slips and failings, many inadvertencies

advertencies and imprudences, and many sins and deviations from their duty, which they are heartily sorry for. The infirmities of such, as are otherwise sincere and good, are not to be called wickedness; and to the infirmities of such, God will be merciful. There are many places of scripture where the miserable state of the wicked is opposed to the happy condition of the righteous; as, *Psal.* i. 6. *The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.* Psal. xxxiv. 15. *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous,* &c. And in the next verse, *The face of the Lord is against them that do evil.* Psal. cxlv. 20. *The Lord preserveth all them that love him, but all the wicked will he destroy.* So in the verse following our text. *But the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.* Finally, the anger and displeasure of God is as fully declared in scripture against the wicked, as his love and favour to the righteous; and there are many instances of his severe judgments already executed on them, as the destruction of the old world, *Sodom* and *Gommorrah,* &c. SERM. III.

3. To conclude, Let us all be exhorted to follow after righteousness. The consideration of so great happiness as the righteous partake of, should certainly induce us thus to do. If the Lord loveth the righteous, how should we all endeavour to be of this character? If therefore we have made righteousness

SERM. III.

our practice, let us perſevere in it, that ſo we may keep ourſelves in the love of God. And if we have hitherto continued in ſin, and neglected righteouſneſs, or turned from it, let us, conſidering the dreadful miſery of ſuch a ſtate, ſpeedily turn from our ſins by repentance, and addict ourſelves to a holy and righteous converſation for the future, and then God will graciouſly, for Chriſt's ſake, account us righteous perſons, and we ſhall be beloved by him. Finally, Let us all make holineſs and righteouſneſs our conſtant practice; let us *live ſoberly, juſtly and godly* in the world, and *have our converſation as becomes the goſpel of Chriſt*; and then, being beloved of God, we ſhall be entitled to his favour and bleſſing here, and to eternal happineſs hereafter, to *a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous judge ſhall give us at that day; and not to us only, but to all them alſo that love his appearing.*

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SERMON IV.

The great Duties of Chriſtianity, recommended and explained.

JUDE, *ver.* 20, 21.

But ye, beloved, building up yourſelves on your moſt holy faith, praying always in the Holy Ghoſt, keep yourſelves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life.

THE Son of Man had no ſooner ſowed the good ſeed, but the enemy ſowed tares amongſt it. As Jeſus Chriſt was the author of a moſt holy diſpenſation, and as multitudes were really converted from a ſinful to a pious life by his and his apoſtles preaching, and ſo became true and ſincere ſubjects of his kingdom; ſo the adverſary ſoon introduced ſome very pernicious doctrines and corrupt practices, endeavouring to mix them with the pure and uncorrupt doctrine of our Saviour, and brought men into the church, and under a profeſſion of chriſtianity, who, having no regard to the

SERM. IV.

chriſtian life, but living looſely, and at random, as if they were ſubject to no law, or under no reſtraint, were a reproach and ſcandal to their profeſſion, and occaſioned the way of truth to be evil ſpoken of. The deſign of this ſhort epiſtle of St. *Jude*, was to preſerve the ſincere and pious chriſtians, to whom he wrote, from being ſeduced and corrupted by this ſort of men, who were indeed as ſpots in their feaſts of charity, or their love feaſts, as *ver.* 12. he tells them, *ver.* 4. That *there were certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation*; or, as it may be more ſafely and truly rendered, *were before of old deſcribed, or characterized, as deſerving this condemnation*; or, *of whom it was before written, that this ſhould be their condemnation*; (ungodly men as *Enoch* long before deſcribed them in thoſe who lived in his time) *turning the grace of our God into laſciviouſneſs, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; i. e. denying them in their works and practices, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, *Tit.* i. ult. *They profeſs that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and diſobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.* St. *Jude*, effectually to guard the chriſtians from ſuch an apoſtacy, ſhews the certainty of the condemnation of ſuch men, in the example of the diſobedient *Iſraelites*, ver. 5. of the fallen angels, *ver.* 6. and of *Sodom* and *Gommorrah*, ver. 7. Then from

the 8th to the 16th verſe, he farther de- SERM.
ſcribes their character, denounces judgments IV.
againſt them, and foretels their condemna-
tion. After which, addreſſing himſelf to the ſincere chriſtians, he ſays, *But, beloved, remember the words which were ſpoken before of the apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; how that they told you there ſhould be mockers in the laſt time, who ſhould walk after their own ungodly luſts. Theſe be they who ſeparate themſelves, who go out from us, becauſe they are not of us*, as the apoſtle *John* ſpeaks; or, who diſtinguiſh themſelves from others as more ſpiritual, whereas they are truly ſenſual, and have not the ſpirit, or any ſpiritual diſpoſition. Then come in the words of our text, as a preſervative againſt the infection that the evil manners and corrupt converſation of theſe men might otherwiſe convey to them: *But ye, beloved, building up yourſelves in your moſt holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghoſt, keep yourſelves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life.* Here we have,

I. The main thing they are exhorted to, or the principal ſcope of this exhortation, and that is, that they would keep themſelves in the love of God. *Keep yourſelves in the love of God.*

II. The means of doing this recommended to them; that they might keep themſelves in the love of God, they

SERM. IV.

were to *build up themſelves on their moſt holy faith, and to pray in the Holy Ghoſt.*

III. The happy effect hereof, which ſhould be an encouragement to them to keep themſelves in the love of God; if by this means they kept themſelves in the love of God, they might *look for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life. But ye, beloved, building up yourſelves on your moſt holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghoſt, keep yourſelves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life.*

I. The main and principal ſcope of this exhortation is this, that they ſhould *keep themſelves in the love of God.* Here we are to conſider this love of God, what it is to keep ourſelves in it, and when we may be ſaid to do this.

The love of God here may admit of two acceptations.

1. It may be underſtood of that love wherewith we are to love God. We ſhould *love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our ſtrength*; this there is the higheſt reaſon for, and this we are often exhorted to; and the love of God may ſignify this love, the love, eſteem and affection we have, or ought to have, for the divine Being, our Creator, Preſerver and Benefactor, the firſt and beſt being, the author and

and giver of all good. This is the frequent Meaning of this phraſe, *the love of God*, in ſcripture. Thus, 1 *John* v. 3. *For this is the love of God, that ye keep his commandments*; by the keeping the commandments of God, we manifeſt the ſincerity of our love to him. So, *chap.* iii. 17. *But whoſo hath this world's good, and ſeeth his brother hath need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* i. e. How can ſuch a man as that be ſaid to love God? Thus our Saviour ſays to the *Jews*, *But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you*; or, that ye do not love God, *John* v. 42. And, to add no more, the love of God is to be taken in the ſame ſenſe, *Luke* xi. 42. *But wo unto you Phariſees; for ye tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs; and paſs over judgment, and the love of God.* Thus then by the love of God is often meant our love to him, or that love wherewith we ſhould love him. And certainly as we are obliged to love God, ſo we ſhould keep ourſelves in this love, we ſhould perſevere in it, we ſhould continue in it, we ſhould not only love him for ſome time, but always; our love to him ſhould be conſtant, we ſhould love him as long as we live. And without doubt, our thus continuing in the love of God, our continuing to love him, and preſerving and maintaining a ſincere, hearty and prevalent affection to him; is the moſt likely

SERM. IV.

SERM. IV.

ly means to preſerve us from being led away with the error of the wicked, and to prevent our being ſeduced and corrupted by their evil counſels, and bad examples. As the fear of God, our fear of him, ſo the love of God, or our love to him, is an excellent means to preſerve us from falling into ſin; they who truly love the Lord will undoubtedly hate evil. And ſo this ſenſe of the love of God may ſeem agreeable enough to the apoſtle's deſign in this place, which was, to preſerve the chriſtians from falling in with ſome evil and vicious perſons among them, as I have obſerved; in order to which he might be ſuppoſed to exhort them to preſerve in their hearts a ſincere love to God. However, I am apt to think this not the ſenſe of the phraſe here. But,

2. The love of God may ſignify his love to us. Thus, 1 *John* iii. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, becauſe he* (viz. Chriſt) *laid down his life for us.* And, *chap.* iv. 9. *In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live thro' him.* Here the love of God ſignifies his love to us: And ſo it does, *Rom.* viii. ult. where the apoſtle is expreſſing his aſſurance that no power whatſoever ſhall be able to ſeparate them from it: *For I am perſuaded,* ſays he, *that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come,*

come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other crea- SERM.
ture, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love IV.
of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord; —~—
i. e. from his grace and favour. And in that well known valediction of the apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* xiii. ult. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghoſt, be with you all.* Thus then the love of God ſignifies alſo his love to us; and this I take to be the ſenſe of the phraſe in our text, where the apoſtle exhorts the chriſtians to keep themſelves in the love of God; for the love of God is as often, if not oftener, uſed in this ſenſe, than in the other; and beſides the phraſe of keeping ourſelves in it agrees better with this ſenſe of the words; for this we read of abiding and continuing in the love of Chriſt, which is to be underſtood of his love to us, or the love wherewith he loves us; as *John* xv. 9, 10. *As the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you: continue you in my love. If you keep my commandments, ye ſhall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.* And as abiding or continuing in the love of God, is abiding or continuing in his favour; ſo keeping ourſelves in the love of God, ſeems to be a phraſe of juſt the ſame import. And ſo this keeping ourſelves in the love of God, is not ſo much the means of our eſcaping the errors and vices of the wicked, as the effect of our eſcaping

thoſe

SERM. IV.

thoſe errors and vices. For as thoſe who indulge themſelves in ſuch courſes do loſe the favour of God, and forfeit his love, ſo thoſe who preſerve themſelves from ſuch practices, and keep themſelves pure of ſuch vices, do of conſequence, at the ſame time, keep themſelves in the love of God. Thus then, by the love of God, we are to underſtand his love to us, the love wherewith God loves us, or in other words, his favour, benignity and loving-kindneſs. This love includes the divine approbation and acceptance; thoſe whom God loves, he approves and accepts of; he pardons their ſins, admits them to the privilege of being his people, and ſervants, and children, and graciouſly accepts all their religious performances. This love is a love of complacency, and it ſuppoſes that God takes delight in the perſons who are the objects of it; that he likes them, and is well-pleaſed with them. There is indeed a love of pity, and compaſſion, and benevolence, which God is declared to have towards all men, even the worſt of ſinners; but the love we are ſpeaking of, is ſuch a love, as only the righteous enjoy, which ſuppoſes the divine complacency, approbation and acceptance. Again, this love includes the divine bleſſing; they whom God ſo loves are bleſſed by him, he does them good after a peculiar manner, orders all their affairs for the beſt, and makes all things work together for their good in the end.

Whether

Whether they have little or much of this world's good, whether they are in prosperity or adversity, whether they are afflicted, or otherwise, they still enjoy the divine blessing; God is their friend, who always designs their good; he is their shield, their support and stay, the strength of their heart, and their refuge in all times of trouble, and delivers them whenever it is for their real good to be delivered. Finally, this love of God supposes persons being entitled to the promises of a future reward, of eternal life, glory and bliss; the effect of this love is the divine blessing here, and eternal happiness in the divine presence hereafter. This then is the love of God that we are exhorted to keep ourselves in; and surely this is a matter of the highest importance and concern to us. The love of God is more valuable than any thing besides, whatever we want, if we enjoy but his love, we are happy, and can want nothing that is truly good for us: *In his favour is life, and his loving-kindness is better than life.* And as we ought in the first place to get an interest in his favour and loving-kindness, so we should above all things take care to keep ourselves in it. SERM. IV.

Keep yourselves in the love of God, i. e. preserve yourselves in it; as you have at present an interest in his love, endeavour to secure that interest, to preserve that invaluable privilege. Behave yourselves so as that you may

continue

SERM. IV. *continue* in the divine favour, that you may *ſtill* enjoy the loving-kindneſs of the Lord, and may *always* be of that happy number who have a ſhare in his love; that you may abide in his favour, and as he has loved you, he may continue to love you, may ſtill approve, and accept, and delight in you, may always delight to bleſs you, and to do you good, and you may continue to be of that happy number, for whom the heavenly reward is graciouſly deſigned. Take heed leſt by following the wicked in their ungodly practices, you fail of the grace of God, you loſe his favour, and forfeit your intereſt in his love; but do you preſerve ſuch a temper, and perſevere in ſuch a practice, that you may always be beloved of him, and may be happy in his love both here and in the world to come. This is the import of this exhortation, *Keep yourſelves in the love of God*; which being ſo eaſy, plain and manifeſt, I ſhall inſiſt no longer upon it.

And ſhall only obſerve farther, that if we keep ourſelves in the love of God, we muſt conſtantly avoid what is hateful and diſpleaſing to him, and muſt perſevere in that which he loves, and likes, and is well-pleaſed with. Hateful practices will make us hateful in the ſight of God; we thereby proclaim ourſelves to be his enemies, and ſo muſt expoſe ourſelves to his anger and diſpleaſure. If we love that which God hates, we cannot expect

pect to be loved of him; and therefore, if we would continue in his love, and abide in his favour, we must continue to avoid that which he hates and is displeased with. And farther, we must continue to do what he loves, and likes, and is pleased with; we must persevere in a conformity to his will, must always love that which he loves, and practise the things he requires of us. God loves those, and only those who love him, and if we would keep ourselves in his love and favour, we must continue to love him. Now, they who love God do love that which he loves, and do that which is well-pleasing in his sight, and agreeable to his will; nothing short of this will prove us to be real lovers of God, whom he will love and favour, and bless, and reward; and therefore if we would keep ourselves in the love of God, and continue in his favour, we must persevere in that which he likes and approves, and must preserve such a temper and conversation as is agreeable to his will. SERM. IV.

Having thus considered the main and principal Scope of this exhortation, *Keep yourselves in the love of God*, I come now,

II. To consider the means prescribed and recommended for the doing of this; which was, the *building themselves up in their most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep your-*

SERM. IV. *yourſelves in the love of God.* I ſhall conſider each of theſe apart. And,

I. *Building up yourſelves in your moſt holy faith.* Here we may conſider what we are to underſtand by this faith, what by building up ourſelves on it, and how the building up ourſelves on our moſt holy faith is a means of keeping us in the love of God.

1. As to this faith, called here *your moſt holy faith*, by it we are to underſtand the whole doctrine of the goſpel, or revelation of God's will, which Chriſt and his apoſtles have made to the world. This we are often to underſtand by faith, in the epiſtles of the apoſtle *Paul*. And this ſeems to be the meaning of it in the ſecond epiſtle of *Peter*, an epiſtle parallel to this of St. *Jude*, ver. 1.—*To them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteouſneſs of God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* But it is very plain, that by the word *faith*, we are to underſtand the doctrine of the goſpel in the third verſe of this very epiſtle of St. *Jude*, where, ſpeaking to the chriſtians, he ſays, *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common ſalvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye ſhould earneſtly contend for the* faith *which was once delivered to the ſaints.* The word *faith* is uſed but once more in all this epiſtle, and that is in our text, *building up yourſelves on your*

your moſt holy faith ; and it ſeems moſt rea- SERM.
ſonable to underſtand it here in the ſame IV.
ſenſe: And the doctrine of the goſpel is
called *faith*, becauſe it is propoſed as a thing to be believed, embraced, and firmly depended upon; and becauſe it requires obedience, as proceeding from a ſincere faith in God, ſuch as *Abraham*'s was, and declares that we are juſtified by ſuch faith, and not by the deeds of the law.

2. What are we to underſtand by building up ourſelves in this faith? The church of God is often repreſented under the notion of a building, which you know conſiſts of a foundation and a ſuperſtructure: Thus we are ſaid to be *built upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets*, i. e. upon their doctrine and miniſtry, *Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone*, Eph. ii. 20. This is moſt commonly to be underſtood of the whole church, called alſo *the body of Chriſt* ; and as the ſeveral members of it make up one regular body, whereof Chriſt is the head, ſo they may be conſidered as making up one regular building, in a beautiful order, ſymmetry, and proportion of parts, whereof Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation, or chief corner-ſtone. Thus in the two laſt verſes of the forecited *Eph.* ii. *In whom*, i. e. in Chriſt, *all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord ; in whom you alſo are builded together for an habitation of*

SERM. IV. *God through the ſpirit.* And ſo 1 *Pet.* ii. 5. *Ye alſo as lively ſtones, are built up a ſpiritual houſe*, &c. And as this is ſaid of the whole church collectively, ſo it may be ſaid of every particular chriſtian, that he is built upon Jeſus Chriſt, upon the faith of him, upon the doctrine of the goſpel, as his foundation. But then as buildings are capable of improvements and additions, the ſame foundation remaining, ſo we may, and ought to improve ourſelves in our moſt holy faith, having laid that as a foundation, and begun to build upon it, we ſhould go on to build upon it, and ſhould be daily making improvements in our ſpiritual building, that it may become ſtill more regular, exact and ſuitable to the foundation. And when we thus endeavour to improve in the goſpel of Chriſt, to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of him, then we may be ſaid to build up ourſelves in our moſt holy faith. And this improvement may reſpect our knowledge, our confirmation and eſtabliſhment in the Goſpel, our temper and diſpoſition, and our practice.

1ſt, This improvement may reſpect our knowledge; we ſhould endeavour to improve in the knowledge of the goſpel, we ſhould acquaint ourſelves more and more with it, and ſhould labour after a more thorow underſtanding in all the parts of it, and the connexion that is between them, and the dependence

pendence they have one upon another. I mean, we ſhould do this, ſo far as is neceſſary to influence us more and more to obey the precepts of it, and to ſtir us up and engage us to the practice of true piety. This ſort of improvement in knowledge is often called *edification*, or being edified in ſcripture, and as it tends to piety and true goodneſs, ſo it is called *edification of God*, or godly edifying; as, 1 *Tim.* i. 4. *Neither give heed to fables, and endleſs genealogies, which miniſter queſtions rather than godly edifying which is in faith.* Thus then we ſhould improve in the knowledge of the goſpel, we ſhould endeavour to acquaint ourſelves more and more with the nature and deſign of it, with the true end of Chriſt's coming into the world, with the precepts, promiſes and threatnings of his diſpenſation; with the ſeveral duties it requires of us, and the ſtrong motives, and high encouragements it gives to the practice of them. And this is one way of building ourſelves up on our moſt holy faith; when we remain not as babes, unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs, but endeavour to be as grown men, who, by reaſon of uſe, have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evil.

SERM. IV.

2*dly*, This improving in the goſpel, ſignified by the phraſe of *building up ourſelves on our moſt holy faith*, may reſpect our confirmation and eſtabliſhment therein; when we

SERM. IV. are more and more ſettled and confirmed in the belief and profeſſion of it; and to this, the attaining to a good degree of knowledge in it, does very much conduce; for ſuch perſons are not as children, liable to be toſſed about with every wind of doctrine. Thus the apoſtle *Paul* rejoiced to behold the ſtedfaſtneſs of the *Coloſſians* faith in Chriſt, *Col.* ii. 5. and *verſes* 6, 7. he ſays, *As ye have therefore received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him, and eſtabliſhed in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thankſgiving.* And, *Rom.* xv. 2. when the apoſtle ſays, *Let every one of us pleaſe his neighbour for his good, to edification:* By edification here he ſeems to mean confirmation, or eſtabliſhment in the faith.

3*dly*, This ſpiritual improvement reſpects our temper and diſpoſition. When we not only know and believe the goſpel, but endeavour to form our minds and tempers by it, and to have our affections and diſpoſitions more and more agreeable and conformable to it. When the great truths of the goſpel make deeper impreſſions upon us, and more and more influence us; when we not only know our duty better, but have a greater will to it; when we are more and more transformed by the renewing of our mind; when our temper, frame and diſpoſition, our deſires, inclinations and affections, our purpoſes,

poſes, aims and deſigns become more and more and agreeable to the genius, temper and ſpirit of the goſpel, then we may be ſaid to build up ourſelves on our moſt holy faith. And this,

SERM. IV.

4thly, Leads to the other improvement in the goſpel, *viz.* improving in the practice of it. When we improve in the temper and ſpirit of the goſpel, we ſhall of conſequence improve in the life and converſation which it recommends. And this, together with the former, is the beſt improvement in the goſpel of Chriſt, the moſt valuable ſenſe of building ourſelves up on our moſt holy faith, without which all other proficiencies and improvements will ſignify nothing. The increaſe of our knowledge will not avail us, if our temper and converſation be not mended and improved; and they ought always to be mended and improved in proportion to our knowledge. Indeed, the more we know of the goſpel, and the more we are eſtabliſhed in the belief of it, the more likely it is that our minds and practice ſhould be reformed by it; and we ſhould make this ſort of improvement in the goſpel the great end of all other improvements; our principal aim and endeavour ſhould be to gain more of the chriſtian temper and ſpirit, to walk more worthy of the Lord unto all-pleaſing, and to be more fruitful in every good work; and, in ſhort, to add to our *faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge*,

SERM. IV. *ledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godlineſs, and to godlineſs brotherly kindneſs, and to brotherly kindneſs charity.* Thus we have ſeen how we ſhould build ourſelves up on our moſt holy faith, or what we may underſtand by that expreſſion.

III. The third thing here to be conſidered is, how the building ourſelves up on our moſt holy faith is a means of keeping in the love of God. This is owing to its being a moſt holy faith. God is a moſt holy being, and this being the nature of God, the faith on which we are to build ourſelves up being a moſt holy faith, muſt be agreeable to this holy nature of God; and ſo whilſt we are conformed to this moſt holy faith, we ſhall enjoy the divine love and favour, and the more we are conformed to it, the more of that love and favour we ſhall enjoy. The Goſpel of Chriſt is a moſt holy diſpenſation, and ſo is the moſt perfect pattern of the divine mind; the precepts of it are holy; the example it propoſes to us is holy, and the whole deſign of it is to advance holineſs; and holineſs being that which God loves, they who obey the goſpel, who copy after that divine inſtitution, and have their mind and converſation conformed to that holy diſpenſation, muſt of conſequence be loved of God, and enjoy his favour and approbation. More particularly,

1*ſt*, The goſpel teaches us to avoid all ſin and vice, whatſoever is contrary to his will, or diſpleaſing in his ſight. It forbids and condemns all unrighteouſneſs, impiety and intemperance; it teaches to deny *ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*, and to *depart from iniquity*. Theſe are the things which God hates, and for which his wrath will fall upon the children of diſobedience; and they who conform to the goſpel, and build themſelves up on their moſt holy faith, do hate and abhor all ſuch things as theſe; and ſo hating that which God hates, and avoiding that which God would have them avoid, they will eſcape his diſpleaſure, and will have an intereſt in his love and favour. God *is angry with the wicked every day*, and *the wicked, and him that doth violence, his ſoul hateth*; but the goſpel teaches us to avoid all unrighteouſneſs and wickedneſs, to mortify the deeds of the body, to crucify the fleſh with the affections and luſts, to purify ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, to put off anger, wrath, malice, blaſphemy, impurity, intemperance, and all other vices; and finally, to abſtain from all that is diſpleaſing to a holy and righteous God, or contrary to his nature and will; and the more we build up ourſelves on this moſt holy faith, the more we hate, and forſake, and avoid all ſuch things. SERM. IV.

SERM. IV.

2*dly*, This moſt holy faith, the goſpel of Chriſt, not only teaches us to avoid all ſin and vice, all impurity and unrighteouſneſs, and whatever is diſpleaſing to God, but it teaches us the practice of all virtue, righteouſneſs, and goodneſs, and whatever is well-pleaſing to God, and agreeable to his holy nature and will. I have ſhewn you, that if we would keep ourſelves in the love of God, we muſt avoid what he would have us avoid, and muſt do what he would have us do; and this the goſpel recommends to us; for it teaches us, that *denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in the world.* The goſpel teaches what is really acceptable and well-pleaſing to God. *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt; and he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, is accepted with God, and approved of men.* So that he who makes it his buſineſs to comform to the goſpel, or to build up himſelf on that moſt holy faith, is ſuch a one as God would have him to be, and ſo muſt be loved of him, and enjoy his favour. The goſpel teaches us to be humble; and *God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace*, or ſheweth favour, *to the humble.* The goſpel teaches us to be kind, charitable and beneficent, and liberal according to our ability; and *God loves a chearful giver, and with ſuch ſacrifices he is well pleaſed.* It teaches us to be ſincere and upright; and *the righteous*

teous Lord loveth righteouſneſs, his countenance doth behold the upright; and *the prayer of the upright is his delight.* It teaches us to be righteous; and *the Lord loveth the righteous.* It teaches us to be pure in heart; and they are bleſſed, becauſe they ſhall ſee God, and enjoy his favour for ever. Finally, it teaches us to be holy in all manner of converſation; and the apoſtle *John* declares, that *if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowſhip with him, and the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin.* Thus the building ourſelves up on our moſt holy faith is a means of keeping us in the love of God; yea this very thing, as it reſpects our temper and converſation, does actually keep us in the love of God. And if we would be always kept in the love of God, we muſt be always building ourſelves up on our moſt holy faith. SERM. IV.

3*dly*, The other thing recommended as a means of keeping us in the love of God is, *praying in the Holy Ghoſt. But ye, beloved, building up yourſelves in your moſt holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghoſt, keep yourſelves in the love of God, praying in the Holy Ghoſt.*

1*ſt*, Some have thought that the apoſtle here refers to the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt which were then common in the churches, among which prayer was one; for as chriſtians uſed then to ſing, and to deliver doctrines, and to ſpeak to edification, and to ex-

SERM. IV. exhortation, and to comfort, by an extraordinary gift, ſo they uſed to pray by an extraordinary gift, *i. e.* by inſpiration; and this being ſo common at that time, the apoſtle may well be ſuppoſed to refer to it in this expreſſion, *Praying in the Holy Ghoſt.* But,

2*dly*, We may underſtand here the ordinary aſſiſtance and influence of the Holy Ghoſt, which all good men partake of in prayer, as well as in all other duties. And ſo the meaning may be, praying with thoſe motions and deſires which are excited, with thoſe affections which are raiſed, and with that temper and diſpoſition of mind which is wrought and preſerved by the Holy Ghoſt, ſo as that we may be ſuitably affected with the conſideration of the being we pray to, with our own frailties, and with the things we pray for, may ſincerely deſire them, and may be diſpoſed to make a right uſe of them.

3*dly*, Poſſibly this may be underſtood of a man's own ſpirit, and we may read it thus, *Praying with a holy ſpirit*, i. e. with a holy temper and diſpoſition of mind. In this ſenſe I am inclined to underſtand the words, 2 *Cor.* vi. 6. for all the other things there mentioned were perſonal to the apoſtle, and it is not ſo natural to ſuppoſe that the Holy Ghoſt ſhould be inſerted between them: Let us therefore, inſtead of the *Holy Ghoſt*, read *a holy ſpirit*, and ſee how it will ſtand then: *By pureneſs, by knowledge, by long-ſuffering, by*

by kindneſs, by a holy ſpirit, by love unfeigned; SERM. IV.
underſtanding by a holy ſpirit, a holy temper and diſpoſition. For thus the word *ſpirit* is often uſed for a man's mind, temper and diſpoſition. So our Saviour tells his diſciples, *Ye know not what ſpirit ye are of.* Indeed a holy ſpirit, ſignifying the temper and diſpoſition of a man's mind, ſounds a little harſh, becauſe we are not uſed to it; but why may not the ſpirit of a good man be called an holy ſpirit, as well as a faithful ſpirit, an humble ſpirit, a contrite ſpirit, a meek and quiet ſpirit, and the like? eſpecially ſince we read of the *ſanctification* or *holineſs of the ſpirit*, of *being renewed in the ſpirit of our mind*, and of *being holy both in body and ſpirit*; for as humble in ſpirit is the ſame with an humble ſpirit, ſo holy in ſpirit is the ſame with an holy ſpirit. And the apoſtle may very well exhort to pray with an holy ſpirit, or a pure heart, ſince *if we regard iniquity in our heart, God will not hear us*; and the apoſtle *Paul* exhorts to *lift up holy hands in prayer*, 1 Tim. ii. 8.

Having thus conſidered this phraſe, let us now ſee how ſuch prayer may be a means of keeping ourſelves in the love of God.

1. In its own nature it tends to this. Sincere prayer, I ſay, in its own nature, tends to keep us in the love of God. For it is mighty ſerviceable towards keeping up a right frame, temper and diſpoſition of mind towards

SERM. IV.

wards God, and preſerving the life of religion in us. It confirms and increaſes good habits, and pious and ſuitable ſenſations of mind, which are moſt likely to produce ſuitable actions, and an agreeable converſation. When men caſt off prayer, and neglect to make their ſolemn addreſſes to God, it is no wonder if they grow cold, indifferent and careleſs in all other parts of their duty. But if we keep up prayer, and do not faint in that holy exerciſe, we ſhall be likely to keep up ſuitable apprehenſions of God, of his power, wiſdom, his holineſs, and his goodneſs; and to have our minds ſuitably impreſſed and affected with divine things; and ſo we ſhall be diſpoſed to be holy as God is holy, to love him, and reverence him, and obey him, in doing which we ſhall be kept in his love.

2. Sincere prayer is a means of keeping us in the divine love and favour, inaſmuch as it is a means of our obtaining help, and aſſiſtance, and ſtrength, and direction from God. If God did not afford us his help, we might ſoon be overcome by temptation, and drawn into ſinful courſes, and fall from his favour; but his ſtrength is ſufficient to uphold us, his ſpirit is ſufficient to preſerve us, and his wiſdom is ſufficient to direct us. But he requires us to addreſs him for theſe invaluable advantages and favours; and if we ſincerely do ſo, we may expect to meet with

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SERM. IV.

ſufficient help, aſſiſtance and direction in our chriſtian courſe. *For if we being evil,* as our Saviour ſays, *know how to give good gifts unto our children, how much more will our heavenly father give the holy ſpirit to them that aſk him.* And St. *James* ſays, *If any man lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall be given him,* James i. 5. Thus we ſee that ſincere and upright prayer is a means of preſerving us in the divine favour.

III. I come now, in the third place, to conſider the happy effect of all this, which ſhould be an encouragement to us to endeavour by this means to keep ourſelves in the love of God. If by building ourſelves up on our moſt holy faith, and ſincere prayer, we keep ourſelves in the love of God, we may then look for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life; *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life.* Hereby is ſignified the compleat ſalvation that ſhall be brought to them at the revelation, the ſecond coming of Jeſus Chriſt; when *to them that look for him, he ſhall appear the ſecond time without ſin unto ſalvation.* This is the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; thus the apoſtle prays for *Oneſiphorus,* 2 Tim. i. 18. *The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.* And truly this ſalvation is a great and an unſpeakable mercy, if we conſider that we were all

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SERM. IV.

ſinners, and on that account in a moſt miſerable condition, or might juſtly have been ſo. We might have been baniſhed from the preſence and enjoyment of God for ever, inſtead of being admitted to that glorious and moſt delightful viſion; we might have been puniſhed inſtead of being rewarded, and miſerably deſtroyed inſtead of being ſaved. And certainly that ſuch ſinful, unworthy and ill-deſerving creatures ſhould be made partakers of the ſalvation which is in Jeſus Chriſt, with eternal glory, is unſpeakable grace and mercy. And this is *the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, becauſe he is the immediate author of this ſalvation. He did and ſuffered a great deal for it here; he died for our ſins, ſhed his blood that we might be juſtified, and pardoned, and ſaved from wrath thro' him, *was delivered for our manifold offences, and raiſed again for our juſtification; and thus being made perfect he became the author of eternal ſalvation to all them that obey him. He is the captain of our ſalvation, and was made perfect thro' ſufferings; and now he is able to ſave all to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him; ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.* As he ſuffered and died to procure this ſalvation for us, ſo he will powerfully ſave and reward us hereafter. Thus then this is the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 'tis his grace, 'tis his love. And the grace and mercy of God appears in a wonderful manner in providing ſuch a Saviour

our for us, and ordaining him to be the captain of our salvation. The mercy of God, as well as the mercy of Christ, is displayed in saving us, 'tis the grace of God which brings salvation to us, and he *of his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.* SERM. IV.

We should now a little more distinctly consider this gracious and merciful salvation. 'Tis *1st*, a salvation, a deliverance from all evil, from all sin and misery, from all the afflictions and disorders which we suffered here, and from that misery and punishment which was the just desert of our sins in another state. 'Tis a deliverance from the wrath to come, from everlasting destruction, and from death eternal, and from all kind of condemnation. And certainly this is great grace and mercy, even if it terminated here. To deliver the guilty from the just punishment of their crimes, to save the miserable, who were made so by their own sin and fault, is certainly an act of stupendous grace and mercy. But this is not all; this mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ extends farther yet; it is mercy unto eternal life. Eternal life is procured for us by him, and he will bestow it at his second coming on all those who love his appearing, who shall live and abide for ever, and be for ever happy. Christ has purchased an inheritance for us, even *an inheritance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, and*

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SERM. IV.

that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for us. He will give eternal life unto all his ſheep, and unto all his ſincere diſciples and followers; they ſhall obtain eternal glory, honour and peace, everlaſting reſt and happineſs, and perpetual and uninterrupted joys and delights in the divine preſence. They ſhall be with Chriſt, and ſhall behold his glory, they ſhall be like him, and ſhall ſee him as he is, and ſhall have their vile bodies changed, and made like unto his glorious body. Finally, they ſhall dwell for ever in the regions of light and bliſs, where God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain; but all things ſhall be well with them, and they ſhall enjoy a perfection of body and mind, and ſhall receive a glorious and eternal reward; for God himſelf will be their exceeding great reward, and their everlaſting portion. This is the *mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life*, which all thoſe who keep themſelves in the love of God may look for: They may firmly believe it, they may hope for it and expect it, and they may rejoice in hope of it; they may hope to the end for the grace that ſhall be brought unto them at the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt; and rejoicing in hope of this Glory, may rejoice even in tribulations, waiting patiently for their deliverance and ſalvation. They who have their converſation

sation in heaven, and so lead a life agreeable to the gospel, having an interest in the divine love and favour, may *look for*, and expect, *the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change their vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body*, Phil. iii. 20, 21. This is the happy privilege of all those who build up themselves on their most holy faith, and so continue in the love of God. As God loves them he will certainly reward them, and they may have the comfortable hope and joyful expectation of it. This hope and expectation is the blessed effect and consequence of their keeping themselves in the love of God, by a sincere conformity to the gospel in heart and life. To which purpose is that in *Tit.* ii. 11, 12, 13. *For the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world; looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* Thus then they who building themselves up on their most holy faith, keep themselves in the love of God, may look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

SERM. IV.

I shall now briefly apply what has been said, and so conclude.

1. We may observe here the reality of a divine assistance. Persons, in order to keep themselves in the love of God, are to make

SERM. IV.

uſe of prayer; they are to pray that God would keep them in his love, or that he would ſo far influence and aſſiſt them, as may be neceſſary to their keeping themſelves in his love. Praying to God in this caſe, in order to our continuing in his love, muſt ſuppoſe ſome divine aſſiſtance. And indeed, this is a thing ſufficiently intimated in ſcripture in abundance of places; particularly in the epiſtle to the *Philippians*, God is ſaid *to work in us both to will and to do according to his good pleaſure*. And it is a great comfort and ſatisfaction to us that there is ſuch divine aſſiſtance afforded to us in the diſcharge of our duty; and that we may be aſſured, when God requires any thing of us, if we are not able of ourſelves to do it, he will enable us to do it, or will grant us all neceſſary aſſiſtance for that purpoſe.

2. We may obſerve, that in order to our perſeverance, or keeping ourſelves in the love of God, ſomething is neceſſary to be done on our part, which if we do not, we ſhall not continue in the love of God. This exhortation would be altogether needleſs and impertinent, if all was to be done in us and for us, and nothing was to be done by us. How could the apoſtle with any propriety ſay, *Keep yourſelves in the love of God*, if they could do nothing towards keeping themſelves in it? Certainly, as we ought to pray for the divine aſſiſtance, ſo we ſhould uſe our own

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vours, and do what we can ourſelves: as the very praying for divine aſſiſtance ſuppoſes our doing ſomething. As there could be no room for prayer in this caſe, without ſuppoſing ſome divine aſſiſtance to be obtained, ſo there could be no place for it if all were divine aſſiſtance, and we could do nothing ourſelves. Let us therefore remember that tho' God *works in us to will and to do of his good pleaſure*, yet we are to *work out our own ſalvation with fear and trembling*. Therefore, SERM. IV.

3. Let us be exhorted to keep ourſelves in the love of God, and to that end to build up ourſelves on our moſt holy faith, and to pray to God continually. If any of us are ſo unhappy as to be under the diſpleaſure of our Maker, as I hope we are not, let us give ourſelves no reſt till we are reconciled to him, and have obtained an intereſt in his love and favour. And if we are ſo happy as to be in his favour, let us endeavour to continue in it, let us keep ourſelves in the love of God. And in order hereunto, let us build up ourſelves on our moſt holy faith, and be ſtill making proficiency in the goſpel of Chriſt. Let us be going on unto perfection; for if we do not go forward in our chriſtian courſe, we ſhall be in great danger of going backward. Let us endeavour to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; and to that end, let us apply ourſelves to the word of God, that word

SERM. IV.

of his grace, which is able to build us up, and to give us an inheritance among all them that are ſanctified. Let us read it and ſtudy it, and exerciſe ourſelves in it, and make uſe of all means for improving it. Let us uſe diligence, care and circumſpection in our chriſtian courſe. This we are frequently exhorted to; and indeed there is great need of it, conſidering what difficulties, oppoſitions and temptations we often have to encounter with, and how prone we are to grow careleſs and remiſs. Finally, Let us implore divine aid and aſſiſtance, and let us always make uſe of it, and co-operate with it, that we may always keep ourſelves in the love of God. Let us avoid ſin, which is hateful and diſpleaſing to him, perſevere in holineſs and righteouſneſs, and then we may look for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life, and may be aſſured, that *neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*

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SERMON V.

The Nature and Obligation of Prayer.

1 THESS. v. 17.

Pray without ceaſing.

SERM. V.

THE apoſtle in this epiſtle, expreſſes in a wonderful manner, his love and affection towards the church of the *Theſſalonians*; they were dear unto him upon the account of their ready reception of the goſpel, of their ſteady and firm adherence to the chriſtian faith, and the many ſufferings and perſecutions they had chearfully endured for the ſake of it: hereupon he commends them, and thanks God on their behalf; and foraſmuch, as they were ſtill expoſed to various and ſore trials, and met with great oppoſition in their holy profeſſion, he expreſſes his tender concern for their perſeverance, and prays earneſtly, that God would preſerve them, and *build them up in their moſt holy faith*, and make them abound in the exerciſe of all holy and religious duties; and then he briefly ſhews them the nature

SERM. V. and design of the christian dispensation, and tells them, that the will of God was their sanctification, and that they were called unto holiness, which he therefore earnestly exhorts them to follow after; and in the close of the epistle, he proposes some brief exhortations to several christian duties, among which, is that in our text, *Pray without ceasing*.

As the christian religion most strictly enjoins all manner of pious and holy exercises, and most plainly discovers to us the nature of all those duties that God requires us to perform, so it affords the best and noblest encouragements to the practice of them: we are therein assured of the favour of God, if we sincerely endeavour to do those things which please him; the most valuable and glorious promises are therein made to the righteous, and an eternal reward of the highest happiness assured to them who preserve a holy conversation. The duties, that immediately respect God, ourselves, and our neighbour, are in the clearest manner proposed, with the highest reason inforced, and by the greatest encouragements recommended to us in the gospel, wherein we are taught to live soberly, righteously and godly in the world. Whatever is agreeable to the true light of nature, to the relation we stand in to the divine Being, and the obligations we are under

under to one another, is the general design of the doctrine of Christ. SERM. V.

As all duties, even those which respect ourselves or our neighbour, have an ultimate regard to God, as they result from the condition he has placed us in in the world, are performed in obedience to his will, and directed to his glory, so there are some that immediately respect God himself, which follow from the relation we are in to him, as he is our Creator, our supreme governor and continual benefactor; which duties contain the worship and service that is due to him from us, who are rational creatures dependent on him: and these duties, which immediately regard the divine Being, and are of a moral nature, are various, such as love to him, trust in him, praising of him, praying to him, giving thanks to his name, and the like. That which we are exhorted to in our text, and commanded to continue in, and which therefore we are to treat of at this time, is the duty of prayer, the reasonableness and morality of which duty is evident, and the usefulness and advantage of it in every condition very great, and most highly to be esteemed.

In treating on these words, I shall shew what prayer is, and wherein it consists; how it is to be performed by us, so that it may be accepted of God, and answer its end; what we are to understand by praying without

SERM. V. out ceasing; and why we are thus to be found in the practice of this duty.

I. We are to consider what prayer is, and wherein it consists. And here I shall not insist upon all the several parts, that are usually reckoned in prayer, such as confession, thanksgiving, and the like; but shall confine myself to that, which is chiefly signified by this word, *viz.* petition, which is also intended by it in this place, for thanksgiving is enjoined in the following verse, *in every thing give thanks.*

Prayer then is our addressing God in a way of petition or request, wherein we ask things of him, and desire him to do such and such things for us; it is, as the scripture speaks, *a making known our requests unto God*; not that we are to think, that we inform God by our prayers; for as all things, so every state and circumstance of ours, is perfectly known to him, and he *knows what things we have need of before we ask him.* But in prayer we humbly present our case before him, which he was perfectly acquainted with before, and supplicate his goodness for those things we stand in need of. Many are our necessities, and various are our wants; as we are dependent creatures, and live in a sinful and miserable world, we stand in need of many things, and God, who is our Creator, is all-sufficient and able to supply all our wants; and such is his goodness, that he is ever inclined

clined to beſtow his bleſſings on his creatures. There are many bleſſings neceſſary to be obtained by us, and many evils to be avoided; the bleſſings of life are to be ſought at the hands of God, and thoſe that are neceſſary for our ſouls, and relate to the life to come, ſhould always be the ſubject of our prayers and ſupplications; thus we ſhould pray for the forgiveneſs of our ſins, for the holy ſpirit, for help againſt temptations, for deliverance from evil, and the like; *and in every thing by prayer and ſupplication, we ſhould make known our requeſts unto God.* We are likewiſe not only to pray for ourſelves, but for one another, as the apoſtle *James* adviſes, ch. v. *ver.* 16. *Pray one for another*; and this we ſhould do for all men, and for all ranks and conditions of them, 1 *Tim.* ii. 1, 2. *I exhort therefore that firſt of all, ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority.* We ſhould pray for bleſſings on our neighbour, whereby I mean all our fellow-creatures; for their temporal and eternal welfare; and from our prayers, we ſhould not exclude even our enemies, *Mat.* v. 44. *Pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you and perſecute you.* Prayer is either ſecret, by one's ſelf, or private in one's family, or publick with others in an aſſembly or congregation; it is certainly our duty to attend on publick prayer, and to maintain

SERM. V.

SERM. V. maintain prayer in our houſes; and he that does not make conſcience of praying by himſelf in ſecret, is alſo very unworthy of the chriſtian name. We ought frequently, and as we have opportunity, to expreſs our deſires to God, between him and ourſelves, and to pour out our heart before him in ſecret, *Mat.* vi. 6. *But thou when thou prayeſt, enter into thy cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy door, pray to thy father which is in ſecret, and thy father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly.* True prayer is the preſenting the deſires of our heart to God; and though words are neceſſary when we join with others in this duty, yet ſtill we muſt remember that it is the heart that God regards, in this duty as in all others, and by ourſelves, it is indifferent whether we uſe words in prayer or not; as God does not need our words, ſo neither does he reſpect our prayers ever the more for them; our deſires are ſufficiently known to him, and the ſilent raiſing of our minds to him, is well-pleaſing in his ſight. As words are not eſſential to prayer, ſo we ought not to think that God is moved by entreaties, as we are, and much leſs that our much ſpeaking ſhould prevail upon him to hear us; though great bleſſings are obtained by prayer, yet it is not that God is moved or prevailed upon to change his mind, but it is his will that thoſe, who pray to him as they ought,

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ſhould have their prayers anſwered, and thoſe favours beſtowed on them, as are promiſed to ſuch as are found in the ſincere exerciſe of this duty; and hereupon we are cautioned againſt much ſpeaking and vain repetitions in prayer, *Mat.* vi. 7, 8. *But when ye pray, uſe not vain repetitions, as the heathen do, for they think that they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking; be not ye therefore like unto them, for your father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye aſk him.* So in *Eccl.* v. 2. *Be not raſh with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be haſty to utter any thing before God, for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few.* And therefore farther, we are not to underſtand by the parable of the unjuſt judge, *Luke* xviii. 1, *&c.* and the importunate friend, *Luke* xi. 5, *&c.* as if God was to be moved by our importunity; but the deſign of thoſe parables, which alone is to be obſerved in diſcourſes of that nature, is, to prevent our being diſcouraged from the exerciſe of prayer, or the throwing it wholly off, becauſe it is not preſently anſwered. As to the manner of prayer, though I am far from cenſuring thoſe who uſe a ſet form prepared by others, which I believe many a ſincere chriſtian does; yet as our wants are various, and cannot well be comprehended in ſet forms compoſed by others, I think it moſt proper to uſe one's own expreſſions. SERM. V.

SERM. V. preſſions in prayer, as they plainly and naturally flow; and if we read the ſcriptures diligently, we ſhall from them be furniſhed with the beſt and moſt ſuitable matter for prayer upon all occaſions.

Thus have I ſhewn you what this duty of prayer is, *viz.* that it is a ſupplicating the divine goodneſs for the beſtowing of all manner of bleſſings upon ourſelves and others; the ſerious humble and fervent expreſſion of our deſires to God, to which the promiſe of a bleſſing is moſt graciouſly made.

II. We are now to conſider how we ought to behave ourſelves in prayer, or what qualifications are neceſſary to our prayers, in order to render them acceptable.

That our prayers may be accepted, we ſhould have ſomething more than the bare outward form of devotion; a ſuitable diſpoſition of mind, and an agreeable life is neceſſary, for without theſe, our prayers will do us no good. More particularly therefore,

1. If we would have our prayers accepted, they muſt be attended with holineſs and obedience to all the divine precepts. We cannot expect that our prayers ſhould be anſwered, and ſhould have the divine approbation, unleſs we preſerve a good and pious diſpoſition of mind, and endeavour to be holy in all manner of converſation; if we go on in a courſe of ſin againſt God,

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we may well think he will not hear our prayer; if we neglect to obey his righteous precepts, and refuse to walk in his ways, it is but reasonable and just that he should reject our petitions and disregard all our cries: but if we endeavour so to walk as to please God, he will also be pleased with our prayers, and we need not doubt but they will be accepted of him. God is the most holy Being, and to him only we must direct our prayers, and the way to have them answered is certainly *to be holy as he is holy*. So far is God from answering the prayers of the wicked, so far are the supplications of such persons from being acceptable or well-pleasing to him, that he is displeased and angry with them, when they pray unto him; hence he tells the Jews, *Is.* i. 15. *When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you, yea when ye make many prayers, I will not hear.* And the reason is assigned, *your hands are full of blood:* they were guilty of great cruelty and injustice, and defiled with abominable practices. Impurity, unrighteousness and sin are contrary to the very nature of God; certainly then he cannot be pleased with those who follow such practices, and if he is displeased with them, he will not grant them their requests: but those who *eschew evil and do good*, who follow after holiness, piety, and charity, and obey the divine precepts, will have their prayers

SERM. V.

SERM. V. prayers accepted, and graciouſly anſwered, for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers, tho' his face be againſt them that do evil. When we make our prayers to God, we ſhould lift up holy hands to him, for if we regard iniquity in our heart, he will not hear us. If we pray to the divine Being, and do not at the ſame time love and follow after holineſs, our prayers cannot be ſincere; for while we draw near to him in prayer, we, by ſinning againſt him, remove our hearts far from him, and certainly without ſincerity no duty is regarded and accepted of God; for it is the heart that God reſpects in all the duties we perform to him, and therefore he denounces judgments upon the *Jews*, tho' they drew near to him with their mouth, and honoured him with their lips, becauſe they removed their heart far from him, *Iſa.* xxix. 13. That God regards only the prayers of the righteous, whilſt he is diſpleaſed with, and rejects thoſe of the wicked, is manifeſt from the nature of things, and from many places of holy ſcripture. If we conſider the nature of things, we ſhall find, that as God is holy, he muſt neceſſarily be diſpleaſed with unholy and unrighteous practices, and conſequently with thoſe who follow them, and live in the exerciſe of them; and if ſo, it cannot be that he ſhould be pleaſed with any of the addreſſes of ſuch perſons,

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and consequently their prayers will not be regarded; and then, as it is most reasonable and just that we should obey the commands of God, he will certainly be just in denying the petitions of those who refuse to obey them; but as holiness and righteousness is agreeable to the divine will and law, they will certainly have the divine approbation who live a holy and righteous life, and consequently their prayers will be accepted. This is also plain from holy writ: The Psalmist says, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me,* Psal. lxvi. 18. And we are told, *Prov.* x. 24. that *the desire of the righteous shall be granted.* And in *Prov.* xv. 8. we have both these together, *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight.* So in *ver.* 29. *The Lord is far from the wicked, but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.* And in *Prov.* xxviii. 9. 'tis said, *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.* I will conclude this particular, by telling you, that if you would have your prayers answered, you must exercise the duty of forgiving one another; and this I mention particularly, because our Saviour has so particularly and strictly enjoined it, and has assured us, that the prayers for the forgiveness of our sins will not be heard without it, as in *Mark* xi. 25, 26. *And when ye stand, praying, forgive,*

SERM. V.

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SERM. V. *if you have ought againſt any; that your Father alſo which is in heaven may forgive you your treſpaſſes; but if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your treſpaſſes.*

2. If we would have our prayers accepted, they muſt be joined with faith, or a true belief of the divine promiſes. The promiſes of God, which all reſult from his goodneſs, are the foundation of our prayers, for the ſubject of prayer ought to be that which is agreeable to his will; which tho' it be known but in part from the light of nature, is fully revealed in the holy ſcriptures, and contained in thoſe divine promiſes therein made. The promiſes that relate to this life are more general, relate not ſo much to particular caſes, and give us to underſtand little more, than *that all things ſhall work together for good to them that love God*, which is indeed ſufficient; but the promiſes of bleſſings relating to the life to come are more particular and expreſs; and therefore, when we pray for any particular thing relating to this life, it is proper that we ſhould aſk it with ſubmiſſion to God's will, or with this condition, *viz.* if it be according to his will, becauſe we know not the will of God with reſpect to ſuch a particular caſe; but if we pray for the bleſſings of the world to come, ſuch as the forgiveneſs of our ſins, ſanctification, eternal life, and the like, we may aſk them abſolutely, or without

out adding any such condition, because we know from the word of God, that these things are agreeable to his will. Seeing therefore that God has made these many great and precious promises to us, it becomes us to exercise faith in them, and to have a firm dependence on them, when we supplicate for the blessings contained in them; for God regards the prayers of those who believe his promises, and make them the ground of their petitions; but the prayers of those who are wavering and uncertain, are of little account: As *without faith it is impossible to please God*, so unless our prayers are attended with faith, or a belief of the divine promises, they are not likely to be acceptable to him. The apostle *James*'s words are very observable to this purpose, *chap.* i. 5, 6, 7. *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him; but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed; for let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.* SERM. V.

3. If we would have our prayers accepted, we must offer them up in the name of Christ. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and men; he came into the world to die for us, that we might be justified by his blood, and receive the remission of sins; and he now appears in the presence of God for

SERM. V. us, and makes continual interceſſion for us at his right-hand; and it is thro' him that all our duties are accepted of God, and all our prayers heard: Therefore, as we ought to have reſpect to Chriſt for the acceptance of all our religious performances, ſo more particularly we ought to offer up prayers to God in his name, that both thoſe ſervices of ours may be accepted, and we may obtain the bleſſings we pray for, and which are purchaſed for us by Chriſt. God himſelf teſtified of Chriſt, that he is his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleaſed; him he always heard on earth, as he does now in heaven, and he is conſtituted our head, and the captain of our ſalvation; we ought therefore thro' him to preſent ourſelves and all our religious ſervices to God, and then we need not doubt of their being accepted; and as under the diſpenſation of the goſpel it is required, that in all reſpects we worſhip God thro' Chriſt, ſo it is agreeable to this diſpenſation to offer up our prayers in his name, as our Saviour directed his diſciples a little before he left the world, *John* xvi. 23, 24. *And in that day ye ſhall aſk me nothing. Verily, verily I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my name, he will give it you: hitherto ye have aſked nothing in my name; aſk, and ye ſhall receive, that your joy may be full.* And, *ver.* 26. *At that day ye ſhall aſk in my name.*

III. I come now to ſhew, what we are to underſtand by *praying without ceaſing*. SERM. V.

It would be ridiculous to underſtand hereby, that we ſhould do nothing elſe but pray. But, 1. Theſe words may intend, that we ſhould always be in a diſpoſition for prayer, and ready for the exerciſe of it on all occaſions; that we ſhould always have our hearts prepared for this duty, and be of ſuch a frame and temper of mind as is neceſſary to it, and will put us upon the exerciſe of it in every condition and circumſtance. We ſhould always have a due ſenſe of our manifold wants, the relation we ſtand in to God ſhould always influence us, and engage us to the performance of this, as of all other duties, and a belief of the divine goodneſs, power and providence ſhould ever impreſs our minds; we ſhould walk humbly with God, ſhould retain in our minds a ſenſe of our dependence on him, and ſhould alway have our expectation from him. We ſhould be always prepared to call upon him, and to ſend up our deſires to him in every condition and occurrence of life; in all difficulties, dangers, exigencies and afflictions, we ſhould be ready to invoke his aid and direction, to ſupplicate his goodneſs, to deprecate his judgments, and to implore his ſalvation; and, finally, to make our prayers and ſupplications to him at all times, and upon all occaſions: And this ſeems to be the meaning of watching un-

SERM. V. to prayer, which we are frequently exhorted to.

2. By these words, *Pray without ceasing*, we may understand, that we should persevere in this duty, and by nothing be discouraged from the exercise of it. Prayer is not to be made for some part of our life, and then to be left off and laid aside, but we should go on to call upon God, and should pray unto him as long as we live. We should take care, that after we have been zealous and diligent in the use of prayer for some time, we do not faint and grow weary of it; but we should be still placing our hopes in the divine promises, and stirring up and encouraging ourselves to constancy and perseverance in the practice of this duty. We should consider that we are here in a state of trial, and therefore, tho' things should sometimes not go very well with us, we ought still to trust in God, and depend upon his goodness, and in this trust and confidence to present our supplications to him. Tho' we may not presently receive the answer of our prayers, we should not let this discourage us, for God oftentimes defers the answer of them, to exercise our faith and patience, our trust in him, and dependence upon his promises. We should therefore consider, that God is good, and merciful, and faithful, and that all his promises are sure, and will in his due time be fulfilled; that so, tho' we may meet with many dark dis-

dispensations, we may notwithstanding be encouraged to hold on in this necessary and comfortable duty; for thus we are exhorted to continue in prayer, or to persevere in it; and we are told, *Luke* xviii. 1. that our Saviour spoke a parable to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint, *i. e.* so to trust in God, and to depend upon his promises, as never to be discouraged from the exercise of prayer. SERM. V.

3. We *pray without ceasing*, when we keep up a course of prayer, and neglect not the ordinary performance of it. We ought not only to take care, that we do not wholly disuse prayer, but we should frequently, and as often as our affairs permit, call upon God, and commit our ways to him in prayer. There are indeed no set times certainly prescribed for prayer, neither will the various circumstances of persons admit of any certain rule in this affair; but then we should make conscience of performing this duty as often as we can; and as our wants are daily, and we have daily need of favour, succour and assistance from God, we should endeavour, if we can, to be found in the exercise of this duty every day; and the morning and evening are certainly very proper seasons for this purpose. This practice of daily prayer is not without example in holy scripture. Thus *David*, Psal. lv. 16, 17. says, *As for me, I will call upon God: and the Lord shall save*

SERM. V.

me. Evening and morning, and at noon will I pray and cry aloud, and he ſhall hear my voice. And thus we are told, that *Daniel kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and give thanks before his Lord, as he did afore time*, Dan. vi. 10.

IV. I come now briefly to mention the reaſons why we ſhould thus be found in the exerciſe of this duty of prayer.

1. Prayer is a moral duty, and expreſly commanded in the word of God. There are ſome things commanded in the divine word, that are not of a moral nature, and theſe we ſhould by no means be obliged to, if they had not been thus commanded; but the moral duties that are thus recommended to us in the holy ſcriptures, we ſhould be indiſpenſibly obliged to perform, if they were not expreſly commanded by God, for ſuch duties as are founded on reaſon, are known by the light of nature, and reſult from the nature of things. To worſhip God is certainly a moral duty, and not only the worſhip of God in general is taught us by the light of nature, but the ſeveral parts of his worſhip may fairly be deduced from thence; and hereby we are taught, that prayer is a part of the worſhip we owe to God; for, as he is our all-ſufficient and bountiful Creator, and we are creatures dependent on him, we ought certainly to look for him for all things we want, and conſequently to pray unto him for

for the beſtowing of them: This therefore being a moral duty, we are neceſſarily obliged, all of us, to be found in the practice of it; as we are alſo, upon the account of its being expreſly injoined in the word of God. SERM. V.

2. We ſhould *pray without ceaſing*, becauſe we are in continual need of bleſſings from God, and prayer is the way to obtain them. Whatever we enjoy, we cannot properly call our own, for as we receive all we enjoy at the hands of God, ſo he can deprive us of it when it pleaſes him; and we not only depend upon God for the continuance of the bleſſings we enjoy, but we are in daily want of many favours from him, we need his direction, his aſſiſtance, and his bleſſing at all times in the affairs of this life, and things relating to our bodies, and we depend on him for the reception of all ſpiritual good; and this being ſo, we have continual occaſion, not only to pray to him for the ſecuring to us the things we already enjoy, but alſo for the beſtowing of ſuch good things as we actually want. Thus, as we are daily expoſed to temptations, we ſhould daily pray for ſtrength and deliverance; and as we often ſin againſt God, ſo we ſhould continually addreſs him for pardon and forgiveneſs. And if we thus implore the divine goodneſs for the things we always want, it is certainly the way to obtain them; according to many divine promiſes, particularly, *Pſal.* l. 15. *Call upon me*

SERM. V. *in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me.* And very ſuitable to this purpoſe are the words of our Saviour, *Mat.* vii. 7—11. *Aſk, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek and ye ſhall find: knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. For every one that aſketh receiveth; and he that ſeeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it ſhall be opened.* And, *ver.* 11. *If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that aſk him?*

3. We ſhould keep up the exerciſe of prayer, becauſe it will be a means of preſerving the life of religion, and maintaining holy habits and affections. Thoſe who neglect the practice of this duty will infallibly become indifferent and careleſs in the matters of religion, and will, in time be very little diſpoſed to piety, and have little or no heart to the exerciſe of all other religious duties. Thoſe who thus forſake God, by neglecting to call upon him, are very likely to be forſaken of him, and ſo liable to depart from him in all other reſpects. Prayer being a moral duty, as well as commanded in the divine word, a bad conſcience, and bad diſpoſitions of mind ſeem to be the neceſſary effects of the neglect of it. But, on the contrary, if any one be diligent and conſtant in the uſe of prayer, he will by degrees gain much life and vigour in the ways of God; while

while he prays to the divine Being, he will have his mind impreſſed with an awful ſenſe of his greatneſs and ſovereignty, and of his dependence on him, and ſubjection to him; his truſt in God, and hope in his divine promiſes will be revived and ſtrengthened, and he will by this means, in habituating himſelf to the exerciſe of this duty, have all holy habits and devout ſenſations of mind kept up and increaſed, and be readily diſpoſed to the practice of every good work. Thus have I briefly gone through what I propoſed to conſider; and now, for a concluſion, I ſhall only add a brief exhortation to this duty. SERM. V.

We have ſeen what obligations we are under to the performance of this duty of prayer, and of what great advantage the exerciſe thereof will be to us: Let us therefore, as many of us as have been negligent in this reſpect, be exhorted to apply ourſelves with ſincerity to call on God; and thoſe of us who have uſed ourſelves to the practice of this duty, let us take care that nothing may cauſe us to leave off this holy duty; but as God is ſo good and gracious to us, as not only to permit us, who are ſinners, but alſo to encourage us to pray unto him, and as prayer is a moral duty which is taught us by the light of nature, let us not be ſo ungrateful, let us not be ſo wicked, as wholly to neglect it; but let us ſupplicate the divine goodneſs for ourſelves and others; let us with reſignation

SERM. V.

tion to the will of God ask the blessings of this life at his hand, and let us with confidence, and from a firm belief of the divine promises, pray to him for the blessings that pertain to the life to come; let us often, and upon every occasion, be lifting our hearts to God, and, as frequent as we can, set apart some time for solemn prayer; let us be ready to join in *publick prayer*, let us pray in our families, and above all make conscience of secret prayer; and let us not pursue this course for some time, and then grow weary and leave it off, but let us imitate *Cornelius*, who prayed to God always; let us ever be disposed to this duty, and persevere in the practice of it; and above all, let us maintain such a conversation, and lead such a life, as will render our prayers acceptable unto God; let us abstain from sin, and follow after holiness and righteousness; if we pray to God, and at other times take liberty to profane his name, can we think that our prayers will be grateful to him? Will he, who is altogether holy and pure, take notice of their petitions, who allow themselves in wanton and impure practices? and have we any reason to expect that God will favour us in granting our requests, if we are unrighteous and uncharitable, and neglect to love and do good one to another? Or can we pray sincerely for others, as we ought, whilst we want a charitable and forgiving temper of mind? Let us therefore, from

from a due consideration of these things, be induced to apply ourselves to the practice of all good works, and then we shall approve ourselves sincere in calling upon God. Let us lift up holy hands unto him; let us pray in faith, and offer up our petitions in the name of Christ, and then our prayers will be accepted, and will be answered so far forth as will be for our good in this life, and will at last, as all other good works, be graciously rewarded by him, *who is the rewarder of all those that diligently seek him.*

SERM. V.

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SERMON VI.

The Loveliness and Efficacy of Charity.

1 Cor. xiii. 4—7.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

SERM. VI.

THE apostle is here describing a temper and disposition of mind which is frequently recommended in the gospel, which becomes all men, and which all christians especially, ought to endeavour to maintain, to wit, a sincere good-will and unfeigned love and affection towards one another, and to all mankind, which is here signified by the word *charity*. He recounts several of the properties, and genuine effects of this

this virtue, to which all its other properties may be reduced, whereby the excellency and reasonableness of it most plainly appear. SERM. VI.

Before we consider these properties, it may not be amiss briefly to shew the particular occasion of the apostle's treating of this christian duty in this place, and how what he here says stands with the rest of his discourse. We must know then, that besides other differences in this church of *Corinth*, they fell out one with another about the use and exercise of their spiritual gifts in their assemblies, one contending that his ought to have the preference and precedence, and another his. This was the occasion of great disorders amongst them, and tended to create ill-will and resentment in their minds one against another, contrary to that christian charity which they were obliged by the gospel to preserve inviolable; as it should seem by that exhortation in *chap.* xiv. 20. where, treating of this their difference, the apostle says, *Brethren, be not children in understanding: Howbeit, in* malice, *be ye children, but in understanding be men.* The apostle begins his discourse upon this subject of their difference, *viz.* the use of their spiritual gifts, with the 12th *chap.* and continues it to the end of the 14th. He in the 12th uses several arguments to convince them of the unreasonableness of their emulation and strife in this affair, and to bring them to a better temper

SERM. VI. per of mind; as that they were at first all alike idolaters, one no better than another; and that now they were alike spiritual men, having all believed in Christ, and owned him, which could not be done but by means of the spirit of God: That all those various gifts were of one and the same spirit, by the same Lord, and wrought in them by the same God, who worketh all in all; and that they were given only for the edification of the church, and not to be an occasion of strife and contention about superiority and precedence on the account of them; and so they were all useful and necessary in their place, as the various members of the body were all necessary to the several distinct functions in it. In the last *verse* of the *chapter*, he exhorts them to covet earnestly the best gifts, which may tend most to the advantage and edification of others; or, as some understand it, he blames them for the strife and emulation that was among them about their several gifts; reading it thus, *But ye covet earnestly the best gifts*, or contend one with another whose particular gift is best, and should have the preference; *and yet*, says he, *I shew unto you a more excellent way*; a way that will infallibly tend to your own and others good and edification, much more than the gifts you so earnestly contest about, which are of no value if this excellent thing be wanting. He proceeds in the 13th *chap.* to set

ſet before them this moſt excellent way, to wit, charity, or ſincere and unfeigned love and good-will one towards another, and begins with ſhewing the abſolute neceſſity of it: *Tho' I ſpeak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal. And tho' I have the gift of prophecy, and underſtand all myſteries, and all knowledge; and tho' I have all faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And tho' I beſtow all my goods to feed the poor, and tho' I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* The apoſtle here reckons up the things that were moſt highly eſteemed among the *Jews*, and aſſerts they are all nothing worth without charity. They ſpoke of ſome of their wiſe men as underſtanding the language of the angels, or as being moſt eloquent, or as rooters up of mountains, by which they meant doing great and difficult things, or ſolving high and difficult queſtions; prophecy was in very great eſteem with them, and they held that alms-giving (which might proceed from a deſire of vain glory, or other mean motives) delivered men from hell, and that martyrdom for the law atton'd not only for their own ſins, but even for the ſins of the whole nation: But the apoſtle declares all theſe things to be nothing without charity. The apoſtle, having ſhewn the neceſſity of charity, SERM. VI.

SERM. VI. charity, goes on in the words of our text, to deſcribe it by its properties and effects, ſome of which ſeem to be tacitly oppoſed to the contrary temper that had too much prevailed among the *Corinthians*, and afterwards ſays, *that it never faileth*; whereas the gifts of tongues and prophecy, and the like, would hereafter ceaſe, and give way to a more perfect ſtate; and in the laſt *verſe* he gives it the preference even to faith and hope: *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, theſe three; but the greateſt of theſe is charity.* In the 14th *chapter* he exhorts them, *ſeeing they were zealous of ſpiritual gifts, to ſeek to excel to the edifying of the church*, and prefers prophecy before ſpeaking with tongues, and in the end gives them ſome directions for regulating the exerciſe of thoſe gifts in their publick aſſemblies. And thus we have ſeen the order and connexion of this diſcourſe of the apoſtle's, which is contained in theſe three chapters, and how his deſcription of charity is introduced; which excellent and comprehenſive virtue we come now to conſider: And ſhall,

I. Say ſomething to the ſeveral properties of it here mentioned by the apoſtle.
II. Recommend it, as here deſcribed, to the ſtudy and purſuit of all chriſtians.

I. It may be requiſite to enlarge a little upon the ſeveral properties of this virtue of charity,

charity, this mutual good-will, love and affection. 1. It *ſuffers long.* 2. *Is kind.* 3. *Envieth not.* 4. *Vaunteth not itſelf, nor is puffed up.* 5. *Behaves not itſelf unſeemly.* 6. *Seeketh not her own.* 7. *Is not eaſily provoked.* 8. *Thinketh no evil.* 9. *Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.* 10. *Beareth all things*; or, as it ſhould be rendered, *covereth, or concealeth all things.* 11. *Believeth all things.* 12. *Hopeth all things.* 13. *Endureth all things.* SERM. VI.

1ſt, *Charity ſuffereth long*, bears injuries patiently, forbearing thoſe who do them; is not forward to render evil for evil, to revenge any affront, or to exact juſt puniſhment for a crime; but diſpoſes us to put up wrongs, to forgive thoſe who offend us, to paſs by indignities offered to us, and to bear with the follies and weakneſſes of men. They who are poſſeſſed of charity are of a forbearing and forgiving temper; are far from retaliating or meditating any revenge; are not ſoon tranſported into reſentment, and will ſeem a great while to take but little notice of thoſe things which others would preſently ſeek ſatisfaction for. Charity makes men forgetful of injuries, and ſlow to demand reparation, and diſpoſes them to deal tenderly with them from whom they ſuffer the greateſt abuſes and wrongs. I need not tell you that I am not ſpeaking of the behaviour of nations one towards another, which chriſtianity concerns

SERM. VI. not itself with, but of particular persons. The charitable man does not presently take all advantages against his neighbour, nor molest him for every little offence; he does not exact all the satisfaction that the rigour of the law allows him, is not hasty by violent measures to recover his just debts, and does not presently break off friendship for the first fault. We are ready all of us to bear with, and forgive the miscarriages of those whom we heartily love: If therefore we are possessed of true christian charity, or a sincere affection to all men, we shall be disposed to overlook and pass by their offences and misdemeanours, and patiently to expect their amendment. Charity causeth us to endure provocations with much patience, before we conceive any displeasure against others; it teaches us to suffer a great many wrongs and affronts, rather than proceed to extremities; and when we have a necessity of righting ourselves, to do it without a spirit of revenge, malice and ill-will. Contrary to this long-suffering, which is one property of charity, is the temper of such as are hasty in their spirit, as *Solomon* speaks, who upon every little provocation think of nothing but revenge, and are impatient to recover their right, tho' with the destruction of those they have to do with; as the servant in the parable, *Matt.* xviii. lat. end. tho' his lord had forgiven him ten thousand talents, yet when

when he found one of his fellow ſervants, who owed him but a hundred pence, he laid hands on him, took him by the throat, would not ſtay an hour longer for his money, but caſt the poor man into priſon, notwitſtanding he humbly entreated him to have patience with him, and he would pay him all the debt. But a truly charitable man exerciſes long-ſuffering, and is patient, and unwilling to uſe any ſeverity againſt any, or to do any thing that that may ſeem harſh or rigid, if it can poſſibly be avoided. He gives men time to conſider and bethink themſelves, and is very loth to bring any trouble upon them. Chriſtians are frequently exhorted to the exerciſe of this duty; it is one of the fruits of the ſpirit, on conſideration of the forbearance and long-ſuffering of God towards us, and his having forgiven us; it ſhould induce us to deal ſo with our fellow-creatures, *Eph.* iv. 2. *With all holineſs and meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in love.* And, *Col.* iii. 12, 13. *Put on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering; forbearing one another; and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel againſt any, even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.* SERM. VI.

2dly, *Charity is kind*, gentle, courteous, and benign, and makes men, as far as poſſible, uſeful to all. They who are endowed

SERM. VI. with it, are respectful, affable and condescending, are not sullen and ill-natured, sour and morose, but of a sweet, kind and placable disposition. They carry it towards all with a becoming respect, and endeavour to oblige every one. Christian charity inspires men with sweetness of temper, and makes them mild, easy and tractable; it smooths the ruggedness of their natures, and removes that sourness of disposition and behaviour that makes persons uneasy and troublesome one to another. It was said of *Nabal*, that he was such a son of *Belial*, that a man could not speak with him; and there are many now who make great pretensions to religion, and yet are of such a froward, peevish, quarrelsome and churlish disposition, that there is no living with them: Nothing can please such persons, and one is afraid of having any thing to do with them: And, which is worse, religion itself is often made a pretence for such an uncivil and disrespectful temper and carriage. But the truly charitable man behaves himself kindly towards all, however they differ from him, is mild and friendly, gentle, respectful and courteous in his deportment, free, candid and ingenious in his behaviour, and demeans himself so, as not to be grievous or offensive to any. This gentleness, kindness and goodness, as it is a property of true charity, becomes all christians, and is what they ought to be possessed

poſſeſſed of, and to diſcover in their converſation, as being entirely agreeable to the temper and ſpirit of the goſpel. Gentleneſs or kindneſs is one of the fruits of the ſpirit, mentioned, *Gal.* v. 22. and what we are frequently exhorted to; particularly, *Eph.* iv. ult. *And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted.* And in the forementioned *Col.* iii. ver. 12. *Put on therefore bowels of mercies, kindneſs*, &c. SERM. VI.

3dly, *Charity envieth not*; grudgeth not at the happineſs and proſperity of others, is not troubled and uneaſy at it, but on the contrary is well pleaſed with it. The envious man repines at another's good, and thinks himſelf miſerable, becauſe his neighbour is happy. He would engroſs all good things to himſelf, or would have none partake of them but himſelf, and particular friends of his own. He is uneaſy, and thinks himſelf hardly dealt with, if any thing goes beſides him, or any one enjoys ſomething which he has not. But on the contrary, the charitable man rejoiceth in the happineſs of others, and it is a ſenſible pleaſure to him, that his neighbour thrives and does well. As he weeps with them that weep, ſo he rejoiceth with them who rejoice. He does not murmur and repine at another's welfare, but is pleaſed with it, as being what he wiſhes with all his heart. He looks upon it as one great part of his happineſs that others are happy; and it adds very much to his own ſatisfaction and content-

SERM. VI. ment to see other men easy and satisfied. He would not monopolize the blessings of heaven, but is glad when his neighbours share therein. He would not have any good thing confin'd to himself, but desires that others may enjoy the like. 'Tis a sensible trouble to him when any one is destitute of the comforts he partakes of; and it very much allays his trouble for the want of any thing he stands in need of, when other people have the happiness of enjoying it. This is the temper and disposition of a truly charitable man, for *charity envieth not*. The christian religion, which contains the law of charity, teaches us to rejoice in the happiness and welfare of others, and forbids all envyings against them, 1 *Pet.* ii. 1. *Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and* envies, *and evil-speakings*. Gal. v. ult. *Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another*.

4thly, *Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up*; which I join together, because of their near signification in our translation. *Vaunteth not itself*; it may be rendered, doth not behave itself rashly; is not rash, heady, or precipitate in speaking of, or acting towards others; but is wary and considerate in this affair, and uses deliberation as in a matter of the greatest moment. But, to follow our translation, *charity vaunteth not itself*, is not insolent, assuming and domineering, does

not arrogantly impoſe on others, nor imperiouſly dictate to them, as if we only were worthy to be regarded; but is modeſt and governable, and eaſy to be perſuaded, and willing to yield to others when it ſees they have reaſon on their ſide. This vaunting, and fooliſh, and giddy elation of mind, is the cauſe of manifold diſturbances in the world, and in the church, when men fondly take upon themſelves to preſcribe to others, and arrogantly ſet up their opinions as a ſtandard for every body elſe. But charity does not thus vaunt itſelf; nor, as it follows, *is it puffed up*. Pride and haughtineſs proceeding from a too great opinion of ourſelves, cauſes us to ſlight and deſpiſe all others, which is certainly contrary to true charity. Proud perſons ſo admire themſelves, and their own imagined perfections, that they look down upon all the world with contempt, and can ſee no excellency in any but themſelves: Hence they are apt deeply to reſent the leaſt ſeeming diſreſpect ſhewed to them, and are angry if every one does not eſteem them according to the high opinion they have of themſelves. But love or charity makes us humble and lowly-minded, teaching us to put a due value upon the endowments and accompliſhments of others, and not to magnify ourſelves, or to think of ourſelves more highly than we ought to think, but to think ſoberly. Humility is an SERM. VI.

SERM. VI. inseparable property of true charity, and therefore is frequently joined with it, in the apostle's exhortations, particularly in the forecited passage in *Col.* iii. 12. *Put on therefore (as the elect of God,* &c.) *bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering:* And in the forementioned *Eph.* iv. 2. *With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.* There can be no true charity without humility, and the charitable man, who is truly so, is always a humble man. *Charity is not puffed up.*

5thly, *Charity behaves not itself unseemly*; never treats others rudely in words or actions, nor permits us to reproach or vilify them. It gives no abusive or contumelious language, nor endeavours to disparage or defame any. It can refute the errors of those whom we differ from, without any opprobrious or disgraceful reflections, and answer their arguments, and shew that they are in the wrong, without reviling their persons, or calling them names. This it will by no means do; it will give no needless provocation, and as it will do no evil to others, so neither will it speak evil of them. It will behave itself respectfully and in a becoming manner towards all, without any ill-natured actions, or bitter revilings. It teaches us to put away all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour,

and evil-ſpeaking, and to avoid all virulent railing and ſevere reflections; for *it behaves not itſelf unſeemly* towards any in words or actions. SERM. VI.

6thly, *Charity ſeeketh not her own*; inclines us to have a ſincere regard to the good and welfare of others, and not merely to mind our own profit or advantage. A charitable man is not ſelfiſh, ſtingy and narrow-ſpirited, caring for none but himſelf, and regarding not how it fares with other men, ſo he does but live in eaſe and plenty; but as he deſires, ſo he does all he can to promote the welfare of others: He exerciſes bounty and liberality, if it be in his power, and as he has opportunity does good to all men. He does good to others, though thereby he receive not the leaſt advantage to himſelf, beſides the pleaſure of doing it. Chriſtian charity obliges us to be kind and beneficent even to the unthankful and the evil, and to the poor who are unable to make any returns: It teaches us *to lend hoping for nothing again*, nay, *to do good to thoſe who return evil for it*, and to purſue the benefit and edification of others, though with ſome loſs to ourſelves. We ſhould not pleaſe ourſelves in gratifying our own appetites and paſſions to another's prejudice, but rather ſhould pleaſe our neighbour for his good to edification, and ſhould not look every one on his own things only, but every

SERM. VI. every man also on the things of others; for this is the mind which was in Christ Jesus, who emptied himself, and laid aside his glory, and suffered even the death of the cross for the good of mankind.

7thly, *Charity is not easily provoked*; does not soon fall into a violent fit of anger, is not highly exasperated, and breaks not out into furious and ungovernable passions on any occasion. Charity's suffering long, does especially respect revenge; but this that *it is not easily provoked*, respects the passion of anger, which charity teaches us to regulate and govern, so as that, in the first place, we may not be suddenly inflamed upon every slight fault of our brother, may not be easily angered upon every trivial occasion; but may be slow to anger, and abstain from wrath, as much as we can. A charitable man is not apt to pick quarrels or to fall into a passion upon every little occasion; but is so easy in his carriage, that it is no hard matter for a man to live with him, without ever offending him. We have but little love for those whom we cannot at all bear with; and if we are transported with passion and resentment, upon every little slip or miscarriage, it is a sign our charity is very defective.

When we have just occasion of offence given us, charity will not suffer us to fall into immoderate passion, or to be

be tranſported by blind rage and fury, beyond the bounds of reaſon and religion. Our anger, how juſt ſoever, ſhould never make us injure the perſon offending; it ſhould never break out into fury, and we ſhould never be ſo far exaſperated, as to ſuffer our paſſion to betray us into any unreaſonable and raſh actions, or to hurry us into any indecency or exceſs: But we ſhould ever ſtudy to keep this paſſion within the bounds of reaſon, ſo as to let that govern it, and then it will never tranſgreſs the limits of Charity. SERM. VI.

8thly, *Charity thinketh no evil*; is not jealous or ſuſpicious, does not endeavour to blaſt mens good actions and reputation, by imagining and ſurmiſing ſome ſecret evil, or bad deſign; but puts a favourable conſtruction upon every thing, and always judges the beſt. When a man falls into any vice, charity, inſtead of aggravating the matter, will, if poſſible, find out excuſes to leſſen the aggravation. It will be ſo far from aggravating thoſe injuries which our neighbour may have done us, that it will be ready to find out ſome charitable conſtruction or other, and to deviſe ſome apology for him. It will not permit us to ſurmiſe or ſuſpect that evil of others which we do not know; nor will it cenſure their miſcarriages as done out of malice, or with ill intentions. Finally; it never judgeth any man to be worſe than

SERM. VI. than the tenour and course of his visible actions declare him. But farther, perhaps these words may be thus rendered, charity does not meditate, devise or design evil, to wit, against our neighbour. It is far from wronging or injuring any, or doing any thing to their disadvantage. *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour*, Rom. xiii. 10.

The remaining properties of charity, I shall leave to another discourse, and shall conclude this, by briefly exhorting you to follow after the virtues we have been treating of, and to avoid the contrary vices. Let us *put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering*, and be disposed to further the welfare of all, and to do them good as we have opportunity: This is the true christian temper and practice, which will yield the highest satisfaction in this life, and will be a means of preparing us for eternal happiness in the next. Let us therefore avoid all those vices that are contrary to this heavenly and divine disposition, and lay aside all ungoverned anger, all judging and censuring, all clamour and evil-speaking, all pride and haughtiness and envy; and let us persevere in that excellent temper and practice we have been in part describing; that so being the followers of Christ here, we may at last *have an abundant entrance ministred to us into his everlasting kingdom*.

SERM.

SERMON VII.

The Loveliness and Efficacy of Charity.

1 Cor. xiii. 4—7.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

IN treating on these words, I proposed,

I. To say something to the several properties of charity here mentioned by the apostle.

II. To recommend it, as here described, to the study and pursuit of all christians.

By charity or love, the apostle means a sincere good-will or kind affection one towards another, or to all mankind. Indeed, he

SERM. VII. he is here recommending mutual charity among chriſtians, and preſſing them, by all this diſcourſe, ſincerely to love one another; but that this virtue in its true extent, is to be referred to all men, ſo that we ſhould maintain good-will and a kind affection towards all, is plain from what our Saviour has taught us, to wit, that *we ſhould love our neighbour as ourſelves*, and that all men, however they differ from us, are to be eſteemed our neighbours, ſo as that we ſhould have the ſame good-will towards all, and the ſame readineſs to do them good, as the *Jews* had towards their neighbour, properly ſo called, or their brethren of the ſame nation and religion. And the apoſtle *Paul* expreſly extends the virtue of charity to all men, 1 *Theſſ.* iii. 12. *And the Lord make you to increaſe and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men.* St. *Peter* alſo, when he ſpeaks of adding *to brotherly-kindneſs charity*, by the former means a ſincere love to all chriſtians as chriſtians, and by the latter, an unfeigned affection and good-will to all men as men. And indeed all theſe properties of charity, or virtues contained under it, here mentioned by the apoſtle, are ſuch as ought to be extended to all men, and to be exerciſed towards all as there is occaſion, or we have opportunity. Some of theſe virtues, as genuine fruits and true properties of charity have been already conſidered;

ſidered; which I ſhall but briefly mention, and then proceed to the conſideration of thoſe which remain. SERM. VII.

1ſt. *Charity ſuffereth long.* They who are endued with it exerciſe long-ſuffering, are of a temper which inclines and diſpoſes them to bear injuries patiently, and to forbear the authors of them; are not of a fierce, haſty and revengeful diſpoſition, apt to render evil for evil, to ſtudy retaliation or meditate revenge; but are patient towards all, who have either injured them, or owe them any thing, and ſlow in proceeding to extremities; had rather ſuffer a hundred evils than do one, are of a forbearing and forgiving temper, endeavour to *overcome evil with good*, to reclaim thoſe who have diſcovered any ill-will towards them, by ſoft and kind methods, and bear with the weakneſſes, overſights and indiſcretions of mankind.

2dly, *Charity is kind.* They who are poſſeſſed of it, are kindly affectioned towards others, are of a mild, friendly, courteous, affable and reſpectful temper and carriage, and as far as poſſible, uſeful and beneficial to all.

3dly, *Charity envieth not*; does not murmur and repine at the welfare of others, but on the contrary, is well pleaſed with it, rejoiceth with thoſe who rejoice, and is glad when our neighbour thrives, or does well.

His

SERM. VII. His happiness is an addition to ours, if we have true charity, and we are so far from grudging at his prosperity, that it is what we most sincerely desire and wish for.

4thly, *Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.* It is not insolent, assuming and domineering, but modest and tractable, easy to be persuaded, and willing to yield to others, when it sees they have reason on their side. It is not proud, haughty and supercilious, which temper is altogether inconsistent with charity, forasmuch as it is always attended with contempt of others, undervaluing and despising them and their endowments, which must render a man incapable of expressing that kindness, love and respect to them, which true charity requires and includes; but charity is humble and lowly-minded, teaching us by having sober and modest thoughts of ourselves, duly to esteem others, and to put a just value on their endowments and qualifications. In lowliness of mind, we should *esteem each other better than ourselves*, so as to look on ourselves in the matter of charity, to be as it were their servants, and be as ready to help and assist them, as if we were their *subjects and* servants; for that cannot always refer to judgment, but to the temper of mind and the practice consequent on it.

5thly, *Charity behaves not itself unseemly*; never treats others rudely in words or actions.

It

It gives no abuſive languge, nor endeavours to diſparage or defame any. It will give no needleſs provocation, and as it will do no evil to others, ſo neither will it ſpeak evil of them. But it behaves itſelf civilly and reſpectfully towards all, without any baſe actions or bitter revilings.

6thly, *Charity ſeeketh not her own.* It inclines men to have a ſincere regard to the good and welfare of others, as well as to their own. They who are truly poſſeſſed of it, are not ſelfiſh, ſtingy and narrow-ſpirited, caring for none but themſelves, and regarding not how it fares with other men, ſo that they do but live in eaſe and plenty; but as they heartily deſire, ſo they do all they can to promote the welfare of others, being willing even to deny themſelves, for the ſake of a more publick good, and having the mind which was in Chriſt Jeſus, who, for the good of mankind, *humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs.*

7thly, *Charity is not eaſily provoked*; does not ſoon fall into a violent fit of anger, is not highly exaſperated, and breaks not out into furious ungovernable paſſion on any occaſion. Anger is frequently the cauſe of mens doing a great deal of miſchief to others; if therefore we are poſſeſſed of true charity, and ſincerely love all men, we ſhall be very careful how we fall into anger at

SERM. VII. all, and when we receive any just provocation, shall endeavour so to govern our passion, that it may not transport us with blind rage and fury, beyond the bounds of reason and religion.

8thly, *Charity thinketh no evil*, is not inclined to ill interpret, is not jealous or suspicious of other men, but puts a favourable construction on all their actions, and always judges the best. It is far from censuring and condemning others; it will not suffer us to surmise or suspect that evil of other men which we know nothing of; nor will it accuse them of erring thro' obstinacy, or censure their miscarriages as done out of malice or with ill intentions. In short, it never thinks amiss of a man for difference in opinion only, nor judges any one to be worse than his moral actions declare him.

I now proceed to consider the remaining properties of charity, which have not yet been spoken to, and are these following, *Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth*; *beareth all things*; *believeth all things*; *hopeth all things*; *endureth all things*.

In the 9*th* place therefore, *Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. It rejoiceth not in iniquity*, in any evil done to, much less by others; it suffers us not to be pleased with the evil actions of other men, or with any ill stories, or malicious insinuations concerning our neighbour. On the

contrary, a man endued with charity, is ſenſibly troubled when others do amiſs, and it is a great grief to him to behold the ſins and follies that are committed in the world. As he has a ſincere regard to the temporal and eternal welfare of others, he is very ſorry when by their wicked courſes they endanger both the one and the other, and go the ready way to make themſelves miſerable, both here and in another ſtate. It is a great affliction to him to conſider the prevailing of vice in the world, whereby ſo much calamity and miſery is introduced; and nothing troubles him more, than to ſee men acting ſo very contrary to their real and true intereſt. He is paſſionately affected with ſorrow for other mens crimes, and is ſenſibly grieved to hear any thing amiſs of his neighbour. But he *rejoices in the truth*, rejoices with others when they do well, when they live righteouſly, and obey God, and make conſcience of their duty in every reſpect; truth being often uſed for righteouſneſs, or the whole of our duty. The charitable man takes pleaſure in the good actions of others, and delights to ſee them live virtuous and holy lives, expreſs a ſincere regard to the will of God, and act agreeable to the excellent faculties they are endued with. He rejoices when men do as they ought to do, and by the purſuit of virtue and goodneſs, take the right method to ſecure

SERM. VII.

SERM. VII. their present and future happiness and comfort. It is a sensible pleasure to him, to see men acting agreeable to their rational make, and christians living according to the gospel, which, by way of eminence, is called *the truth*. See 3 *John*, ver. 4. *I have no greater joy, than to hear that my children walk in the truth*. So, 2 Epist. ver. 4. *I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth*. Charity begets in us a complacency and inward pleasure to behold truth and righteousness, piety and goodness prevailing in the world, and to see men yielding obedience to the gospel of Christ. A charitable man bears company with the angelick host in their joy for the conversion of every sinner, and is sensibly pleased with those excellent qualities and dispositions he finds others endued with. How far then are they from charity, who like nothing better than to hear some bad story of their neighbour; who watch for others faults, divert themselves with their sins and failings, and curiously pry into mens actions, on purpose to discover some misdemeanours, that they may have the base and inhumane pleasure of proclaiming and divulging them. But,

10thly, *Charity beareth all things*. It had been more rightly rendered, *covereth*, or *concealeth all things*; i. e. it is not forward to rip up and lay open the faults of others, but dis-

posed

posed to hide and conceal them. It chuses rather to cast a veil over the failings and imperfections of other men, than to publish and proclaim them. If we are possessed of true charity, it will incline and dispose us to conceal the evil we know of others, we shall not be of a forward, busy temper, so as needlessly to reveal our neighbours faults, but shall labour by all means to hide and cover them, unless his own or others good makes the discovery of them necessary. Love, indeed, does not hinder us from warning and reproving those who are guilty of notorious crimes, but rather puts us upon it; but then we should do this privately between them and ourselves alone: Before others we should rather take notice of what is good and commendable in them, and we should avoid, as much as possible, the speaking evil of any one behind his back. Charity obligeth us to make a favourable representation of others, and to speak of them as much as possible to their advantage, to cover their failings, to hide their imperfections, and to conceal their crimes, so far as is consistent with the safety and welfare of other men; and to take all opportunities to commend them, rather than needlessly to defame them, and speak all the evil we know of them. *Love hideth the multitude of sins.* How destitute are they then of true charity, who not only forwardly divulge their neigh-

SERM. VII.

SERM. VII. bours faults and imperfections, but lay to their charge what they are nowise guilty of, and make it their business to slander and backbite them, to load them with calumny, and insinuate all that is bad concerning them.

11thly, *Charity believeth all things*; all the good it hears concerning others, or has the least probable ground for. It believes well of all so far as visible actions will permit, and never presumes to judge mens hearts, and pry into their secret intentions. We easily believe things to be as we before wish them to be; charity therefore being a wishing well to all men, must needs incline us to believe well of them too.

But, in the next place, *Charity hopeth all things*; disposes us to hope well concerning others, tho' their actions at present give us some ground to doubt. Charity inclines us still to hope the best concerning men's designs and intentions, tho' there may be some reason to question their truth and sincerity. When a man sins, charity hopes it is out of weakness, or surprize, or inadvertency, and not out of wilfulness, or a wicked disposition. And tho' our neighbour be at present bad, charity inclines us to hope for, and not to despair of his repentance, and of consequence to endeavour his amendment by all proper methods.

In the last place, *Charity endureth all things*; patiently bears with every thing, tho' grievous

grievous to be borne, and perſeveres notwith- SERM.
ſtanding in the exerciſe of thoſe good offices VII.
which are proper effects of it. It will never
be wearied or tired out, will never ceaſe from
being kind and well-affected to our brother,
by reaſon of any provocation whatſoever. Love
thinks nothing too much to do, nothing too
hard to ſuffer for the good of others; nay it
makes any duty or labour eaſy and pleaſant;
it eaſily ſurmounts all difficulties, and tri-
umphs over all oppoſition: Tho' we meet
with great ingratitude, and unworthy returns
from thoſe who have received any favour
from us, yet love is not apt to repent of the
good it hath done, but ſtill perſeveres, la-
bouring to overcome evil with good.

This now is that charity, that love, good-
will and affection, which we ought to be
poſſeſſed of, and to preſerve one towards an-
other, and towards all men. And having
thus conſidered the ſeveral properties of it,
let me now,

II. Briefly recommend this moſt excellent
way to the ſtudy and purſuit of all chriſtians;
and ſo I ſhall conclude.

This charity, or loving affection and good-
will one towards another, is what all men
ought to be poſſeſſed of; but all chriſtians
who enjoy the excellent revelation of the
goſpel, wherein this virtue is moſt earneſtly
recommended, and by the higheſt arguments

SERM. VII. and motives inforced, are especially concern'd to maintain it, and to excel in it. And yet, with grief be it spoken, scarce any body of men have been, and are more destitute of charity than the christians, tho' the primitive christians were indeed remarkable for it. What violence, oppression and persecution have christians practised one against another? What biting and devouring, what judging and censuring, what strife and envying, and falling out about bare opinions and speculations have there been among them; so that if men were to judge of christianity by the behaviour of the generality of its professors towards one another, and towards other men, they would be apt to esteem that which is in truth the best, the worst religion in the world? But I hope *we have not so learned Christ*; however, I shall beg leave at this time, in a few words, to recommend this virtue of charity to your constant care and practice.

This virtue is most excellent in itself, and most agreeable to reason and the nature of things. The loving of one another, and exercising of charity one towards another, is what the light of nature itself most strongly teaches, we being all made of one blood, having the same common nature, and being liable to the same common necessities. How reasonable and necessary is it that we should bear with and forgive others, and be kind, helpful

helpful and uſeful to others, when we our- SERM.
ſelves ſtand in need of the ſame treatment. VII.
A cruel and uncharitable, a fierce, malicious and revengeful ſpirit, that cares not what miſchief it does to others to gratify its own vicious temper, this, I ſay, debaſes our nature, ſinks us beneath its original dignity, and makes us more like wild beaſts than men; tho', as has been obſerved, lions do not devour lions, nor tygers tygers, but only thoſe of a different ſpecies; whereas men of this temper perſecute and devour one another. But charity, on the contrary, or a ſincere love and good-will towards all, is a heavenly and divine diſpoſition, enobles our nature, and raiſes us into a likeneſs with God, who is love, whoſe tender mercies are over all his works, and who is kind, and does good to all, even to the unthankful and the evil. In ſhort, there is nothing more noble and generous than a univerſal love and good-will to all men; nothing more admirable than mildneſs, gentleneſs, and long-ſuffering; nothing more becoming than benignity and kindneſs; nothing more excellent and honourable than being uſeful to all as far as lies in our power. Beſides, nothing tends more to procure reſpect and eſteem amongſt men, than a kind, gentle and condeſcending temper, that ſtudies to oblige, and rejoices to do good. This temper will alſo yield our minds the

SERM. VII. the highest satisfaction in this life, and will alone fit us for the heavenly state, where perfect love and charity for ever dwell. But more especially, that we may be induced to follow after charity, and to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, let us consider how frequently, how particularly, and how strongly this virtue is recommended to us in the gospel of Christ, which is the rule that all christians ought to walk by. Our Saviour, again and again, commands it, and his apostles most earnestly press and inculcate it. Our Lord teaches us, that one of the two great commandments of the law is this, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, Matt. xxii. 39. and inforces charity to our enemies by the example of our heavenly Father, *chap.* v. 44, 45. *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.* And, *ver.* ult. *Be ye therefore perfect*, i. e. in kindness and goodness, *even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* And St. *John*, by the same great example, moves christians to love one another, 1 *John* iv. 7, 8. *Beloved, let us love one another; for love*

love is of God, and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. Our Saviour also declares this love or charity one towards another to be the distinguishing badge of his disciples, at the same time that he expressly commands it, *John* xiii. 34, 35. *A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* The love of God in Christ is likewise proposed as a pattern for our love, and as an inducement to it, *Eph.* iv. ult. *And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* 1 John iv. 11. *Beloved, if God so loved us, as to send his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, we ought also to love one another.* The love of Christ also is set before us with this design, *Eph.* v. 2. *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.* John xv. 12. *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.* The apostle *Paul* recommends this virtue in the strongest manner, *Col.* iii. 14. *And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.* Rom. xiii. 8. *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he*

SERM. VII.

SERM. VII. *he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.* And, *ver.* 10. *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* And in the last verse of the chapter, wherein is our text, he gives it the preference to faith and hope: *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity.* The several particular virtues which charity takes in, and are here mentioned as properties of it, are also very frequently recommended, and strictly enjoined by Christ and his apostles. We are told in the gospel, that *if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our heavenly Father forgive us*; and that *we should not judge lest we be judged, nor condemn lest we be condemned*, and the like. Thus then we see how much christians are concerned to follow after christianity; and that we may be thoroughly convinced of the absolute necessity of it, let us once more consider what the apostle says at the beginning of the chapter, with which I shall conclude; *Tho'*, says he, *I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And tho' I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and tho' I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing. And tho' I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,* (out of vain glory, or superstition, or the like)

and

and tho' I give my body to be burned, or die a martyr for religion, (which was reckoned the higheſt immediate expreſſion of regard to God) tho' I do all this, *and have not charity*, a ſincere good-will, and unfeigned affection or love to all mankind, *it profiteth me nothing*. SERM. VII.

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SERMON VIII.

Humility and Meekneſs Chriſtian Virtues.

MATT. v. 3.

Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

SERM. VIII.

THE deſign of our Saviour's preaching was to reform the hearts of men, and correct the internal diſpoſition of their minds, and by that means to amend their practice, and rectify their outward actions. He knew that if the tree was good, its fruit would alſo be good, and if the tree was corrupt, its fruit would be corrupt; and therefore that men might bring forth the fruit of good works, of a virtuous and holy converſation, he exhorts them to become really good, and to have their very minds reformed. He tells us, that out of the heart proceeds all manner of wickedneſs, and ſuggeſts, that we ſhould purge the heart from all corrupt deſires and perverſe inclinations, and aim at ſincerity and purity

purity there, that ſo the heart being honeſt and good, we might out of the good treaſure of it bring forth good things, as an evil man, out of the evil treaſure of his heart, brings forth evil things. Thus, in this excellent ſermon on the mount, our Saviour frequently intimates, that we ſhould have an eſpecial regard to the heart, and be very watchful over it; he teaches ſincere piety and righteouſneſs as flowing from thence, making it the ſeat of all virtue and goodneſs, and the ſpring and fountain of all good actions, and a holy life and converſation; and plainly enough ſuggeſts thro' the whole, according to *Solomon*'s advice, that we ſhould *keep our hearts with all diligence*, ſeeing *out of them are the iſſues of life*. And moreover he informs us, that whatever good things we do, they will by no means be acceptable to God, nor meet with his approbation, unleſs they are performed in ſincerity, *i. e.* from the heart. Accordingly he begins this his moſt admirable diſcourſe, wherein he gives us, as it were, a tranſcript of the law of nature, and lays down the chief laws of his kingdom; he begins it, I ſay, with recommending to his diſciples and followers ſuitable diſpoſitions, and holy and regular habits of mind. Our text is the firſt of theſe eight aphoriſms, or, as they are commonly called, beatitudes, which ſtand at the head of this ſermon, and are, I doubt not, well known to

SERM. VIII.

all

SERM. VIII.

all of you, wherein he pronounces thoſe bleſſed or happy, who are poor in ſpirit, who mourn, and are truly ſorry for their ſins, who are of a mild and meek diſpoſition, who hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, or are truly inclined, and are earneſtly deſirous to be good and virtuous in their whole converſation, who love mercy, and whoſe temper of mind moſt ſtrongly inclines them to merciful actions, who are pure in heart, are peace-makers, and are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake. Here we may obſerve, that as moſt of theſe aphoriſms muſt be ſuppoſed to refer primarily to the temper and diſpoſition of the mind, from whence ſuitable actions will neceſſarily flow; ſo the ſixth does expreſly relate thereto, *Bleſſed are the pure in heart*, as does alſo our text, which is the firſt ſentence in our Lord's ſermon, as well as the firſt of theſe aphoriſms, *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* And what good reaſon our Lord had to place this firſt, we ſhall ſee hereafter.

The words naturally lead us to conſider,

I. The character of the perſons who are pronounced bleſſed, *The poor in ſpirit.*
II. Wherein their bleſſedneſs conſiſts, *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

I. We are to conſider and explain the character of the perſons whom our Lord here

here pronounces bleſſed; *bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit.* SERM. VIII.

The addition of the words *in ſpirit*, plainly ſhews that we are not to underſtand this of the ſtate and condition of perſons with regard to our outward circumſtances, but, as has been already obſerved, of the temper and diſpoſition of their minds: And what this temper and diſpoſition is, will be beſt ſeen, by comparing this phraſe, *poor in ſpirit*, with the ſame or like phraſes in other places of ſcripture, and chiefly in the old Teſtament, from whence this expreſſion ſeems to be taken. We have the very ſame phraſe, only with the addition of ſome other words, in *Iſa.* lxvi. 2. I ſhall begin with the firſt *ver. Thus ſaith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footſtool: where is the houſe that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my reſt?* Then it follows, *For all thoſe things hath mine hand made, and all thoſe things have been, ſaith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word.* It will be proper to obſerve here, that tho' in our tranſlation the word *poor* be disjoined from *ſpirit*, and ſeems not to relate to it, yet it may be read thus, *to him that is of a poor and contrite ſpirit*; or, *to the poor and contrite in ſpirit*, joining *poor* as well as *contrite* with *ſpirit*, and ſo we have the phraſe exactly as in our text, only the word *contrite*

SERM. VIII. joined with it. Now, by the *poor and contrite in ſpirit* in this place, it is pretty plain we are to underſtand one who is *mean* and low in his own eyes, and of a penitent and ſubmiſſive diſpoſition; and particularly, by *poor in ſpirit*, one of a truly humble mind. And this will very fully appear from the parallel place, *Iſa.* lvii. 15. *For thus ſaith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit*, or is contrite and humble in ſpirit, *to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* Here we have *contrite in ſpirit*, as in the forecited paſſage, and *humble in ſpirit* plainly anſwers to *poor in ſpirit*. The like phraſe we have in *Prov.* xvi. 19. *Better is it to be of an humble ſpirit with the lowly, than to divide the ſpoil with the proud.* And, *Prov.* xxix. 23. *A man's pride ſhall bring him low, but honour ſhall uphold the humble in ſpirit.* This alſo is the uſual expreſſion whereby the *Jewiſh* writers repreſent the humble man, *viz.* that he is *poor*, *low*, or *contrite in his ſpirit*. Accordingly they have theſe ſayings, *Be thou humble in ſpirit towards all men: He that is humble, or poor in ſpirit is worthy of honour, and the Holy Ghoſt will reſt upon him:* And, *Great are the humble, or poor in ſpirit in the ſight of God.* Thus then by *poor in ſpirit* in the old Teſtament and the *Jewiſh* writers,

writers, we are to underſtand one of a truly humble and lowly ſpirit, who is not confident and preſumptuous, not proud and haughty, arrogant and ambitious, not ſelf-conceited nor high-minded, nor of a worldly, vain-glorious, aſpiring temper; not puffed up, whatever his circumſtances or abilities are, but modeſt in his opinion of himſelf, and low in his own eyes, and humble in heart towards God, and towards all men. And no doubt but ſuch perſons are meant by the *poor in ſpirit* in our text, it being a *Hebrew* phraſe, and very likely taken by our Saviour from the old Teſtament. And thus alſo both the *Greek* and *Latin* fathers underſtood it. The *papiſts* ſenſe of theſe words hardly deſerves to be mentioned, that by the *poor in ſpirit* are to be underſtood ſuch as voluntarily quit their riches and poſſeſſions, and chuſe a ſtate of poverty for the freer exerciſe of their religion, as ſome monks and hermits formerly did, and as the begging friars of that communion pretend now to do; for certainly all who would partake of the bleſſedneſs mentioned in our text, are indiſpenſably concerned to be in ſome meaſure poor in ſpirit, but the papiſts will not ſay that all chriſtians are obliged to turn mendicants for that end; for then all other catholicks muſt be excluded the kingdom of heaven. And that we are not here to underſtand the poor, properly ſo called, appears not only from the SERM. VIII.

SERM. VIII. addition of the words *in ſpirit*, as we before obſerved, but alſo from hence, that the *poor* here ſpoken of are actually pronounced *bleſſed*, becauſe *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, which is not true of all thoſe who are poor in a proper ſenſe, or are deſtitute of riches and worldly poſſeſſions, many, and as it is to be feared the greateſt part of them, being of ſuch a diſpoſition, and leading ſuch lives, as render them unfit to enter into the kingdom of God. Beſides, if the poor in temporals were here meant, the rich who did not forſake their poſſeſſions, would ſeem to be excluded from the kingdom of heaven; whereas St. *Paul* only requires them not to be high minded, nor truſt in their wealth, but in the living God, and to be rich in good works, in order to their laying hold on eternal life. Indeed, there are many gracious declarations in the word of God to the poor of this world for their comfort and ſupport, but then they belong only to thoſe of them who are alſo poor in ſpirit, who love God, and keep his commandments, and behave themſelves ſuitably to the condition they are in. It may be ſaid, that our Saviour, in the place parallel to our text, *Luke* vi. 20. omits the words *in ſpirit*, when he ſays, *Bleſſed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God*; but here we are either to underſtand the poor in ſpirit, or ſuch as patiently endured poverty, or the loſs of all things for the ſake of Chriſt;

for

for theſe words are immediately directed to the diſciples. This phraſe is no where elſe to be found in the new Teſtament, but there is one very near akin to it, and of much the ſame ſignification; it is in *Matt.* xi. 29. where our Lord ſays, *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and* lowly in heart; *lowly in heart.* This paſſage may farther confirm the ſenſe we have given of the expreſſion in our text; for as the word here tranſlated *lowly* does, when uſed by itſelf, ſignify one who is poor, and in low, mean, and afflicted circumſtances in the world; as for inſtance, *James* i. 9. *Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted*; where the word certainly relates to a perſon's ſtate and condition, but when joined with the words *in heart*, *lowly in heart*, it ſignifies one of a truly humble mind and diſpoſition; ſo the word tranſlated *poor* does, when alone, ſignify one in a poor and mean condition with reſpect to the things of this world; yet, when the words *in ſpirit* are added to it, we are undoubtedly to underſtand thereby one of a humble and lowly ſpirit. Thus, I think, I have ſufficiently ſhewn the meaning of this expreſſion, *poor in ſpirit*, and that our Saviour intends thereby thoſe who are of a truly humble, modeſt and lowly diſpoſition: I would adjoin to what has been ſaid, that the *poor in ſpirit* may alſo ſignify thoſe who ſet light by the riches and poſſeſſions of this

SERM. VIII.

SERM. VIII. world, have a mean regard to them, and a low opinion of them, and are far from truſting to them, from ſetting their hearts upon them, or placing their happineſs in them. And this, and the ſenſe we before gave, may very well ſtand together.

Having thus conſidered the proper import of this phraſe, I ſhall now more particularly treat of the temper of mind expreſſed therein.

I. As it includes our humility with regard to the divine Being.

II. As oppoſed to ſelf-conceit, and a high opinion of ourſelves on any account.

III. As oppoſed to ambition, and aſpiring after honour, dignity and power amongſt men.

IV. As oppoſed to an inordinate love of wealth and worldly poſſeſſions.

I. We may conſider this character, *poor in ſpirit*, as it regards our humble and lowly deportment towards the divine Being. As humility in our whole carriage is required of us, ſo it is neceſſary we ſhould humble ourſelves before God, and have low and abaſing thoughts of ourſelves in his preſence, or whenever we conſider ourſelves with relation to him. We ſhould always be deeply ſenſible of our manifold ſins againſt him, and our great unworthineſs to receive good things at

at his hands, and ſhould be truly humbled in a ſenſe thereof. We ſhould confeſs and acknowledge our tranſgreſſions againſt the Lord, ſhould take ſhame to ourſelves on that account, and ſhould with the utmoſt humility aſcribe it to his mercy that we are not conſumed. We ſhould humbly beg pardon of him for all our iniquities, and with the moſt lowly devotion of mind ſhould implore the forgiveneſs of them. The penitent publican in the parable does truly repreſent one who is poor in ſpirit, *Luke* xviii. 13. *And the publican ſtanding afar off, would not lift up ſo much as his eyes unto heaven, but ſmote upon his breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me a ſinner.* As we have all ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God, and in many things we all offend, this ſhould be matter of great abaſement to us, and ſhould cauſe us to humble ourſelves before that God whoſe laws we have broken, whoſe honour we have violated, and whoſe favour we have juſtly forfeited; we ſhould confeſs with the greateſt abhorrence of ourſelves, that we have ſinned againſt heaven, and in his ſight, and have thereby rendered ourſelves unworthy of the leaſt of his mercies. We ſhould take care that we have not ſo high an opinion of our own righteouſneſs, as to forget we have in many things come ſhort of our duty, and done thoſe things which we ought not to have done; but the ſenſe of our great un-

SERM. VIII.

SERM. VIII.

worthineſs, and of our manifold ſins and failings, ſhould always be matter of great humility to us, and make us lay ourſelves low in the ſight of God. And as we ſhould humble ourſelves before God in a ſenſe of our ſins, ſo we ſhould always be ſenſible of our neceſſary dependence on him for our very being, and every thing we enjoy; we ſhould look upon ourſelves as nothing without him, and as miſerable without his favour; as he is the ſole giver of all good, and the only ſource of all happineſs; in all the comforts we partake of, we ſhould ſay, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, O Lord, give glory.* A man who is poor in ſpirit is empty of himſelf, and ſees all his ſufficiency is of God, who is the only ſelf-ſufficient and all-ſufficient Being; he acknowledges all his happineſs to be the effect of divine grace, and humbly looks up to the giver of every good and perfect gift for ſuitable aids and ſupplies and aſſiſtance; he truſteth in the Lord with all his heart, and leans not to his own underſtanding, according to *Solomon*'s advice, *Prov.* iii. 5. He acknowledges God in all his ways, and looks upon him as his great guide, comforter and inſtructor, and his exceeding great reward. And farther, he reverences the divine authority, and ſincerely ſubjects himſelf thereunto; he owns the right his Creator has over him, and does not reckon himſelf his own maſter;

maſter; he trembles at the divine word, and with the greateſt humility, as well as the greateſt readineſs, obeys the divine precepts. Thus he walks humbly with God, and with the greateſt ſubmiſſion has regard to his holy will in every thing. He alſo humbles himſelf under the divine chaſtiſements, and patiently ſubmits to them; he quietly reſigns himſelf to the diſpoſal of the Almighty, and the language of his ſoul is, *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good*; and, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, for I have ſinned againſt him.* He conſiders that God afflicts him for his profit, and ſo he humbly hopes in him, and quietly waits the iſſue. He patiently bears his correcting hand, and humbly ſubmits to it, as knowing that he is puniſhed leſs than his iniquities have deſerved. He is more troubled and grieved for the ſins which may have occaſioned his affliction, than for the affliction itſelf, and the only uſe he makes of it, is humbly to repent of thoſe ſins, and with the utmoſt caution to avoid them for the future. This humble patience under God's hand ſeems to be eſpecially intended in the forecited lviith *chap.* of *Iſa. ver.* 15. *I dwell in the high and holy place, with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* And the chriſtians are certainly exhorted to it, in *James* iv. 10. *Humble yourſelves in the ſight of*

SERM. VIII.

SERM. VIII.

of the Lord, and he ſhall lift you up. And, 1 *Pet.* v. 6. *Humble yourſelves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.*

II. The temper of mind recommended in our text, may be conſidered as oppoſed to ſelf-conceit and a too high opinion of ourſelves on any account. Men are very prone to overvalue themſelves and to admire their own parts, endowments, qualifications, and poſſeſſions. Self-love which is natural to us all, and which is a good thing in itſelf, if it be rightly governed and kept within its due bounds, this ſelf-love, I ſay, is very apt to make us put a higher value upon our own abilities and attainments than they really deſerve, and think more highly of ourſelves than we ought to think. But they who are poor in ſpirit avoid this exceſs, and think modeſtly and ſoberly of themſelves, and of the qualifications they are endued with. They do not arrogate to themſelves what they really have not, nor think themſeves wiſer and better than they really are. They have not ſo conceited an opinion of their own wiſdom and prudence, as to think they can *never* ſtand in need of the counſel and direction of others; nor are they ſo righteous in their own eyes, as to fancy themſelves better than every body elſe; they do not ſo truſt in themſelves that they are righteous, as to deſpiſe and contemn others, as the

proud and haughty Phariſee did, *Luke* xviii. 11. who ſaid, *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or even as this publican.* On the contrary, a man who is poor in ſpirit, thinks modeſtly, meanly of himſelf and of his own endowments and qualifications; and however accompliſhed he may be, he is not puffed up, is not filled with high ſwelling thoughts, nor captivated with ſelf-conceitedneſs or a vain elation of mind. We are not indeed to think that we have not thoſe qualities which we really have, this cannot be, and therefore they who pretend to this, have only a feigned humility. But whatever our parts, abilities, or endowments are, of which we muſt needs be conſcious, we ſhould not be proud of them, nor puffed up with a fond conceit of them, or deſpiſe others who want them. We ſhould think that ſome, though not all others, may be wiſer and better than ourſelves, and may be capable, in ſome reſpect or other, to inſtruct or inform us, which inſtruction, we ſhould never be above receiving and attending to, if it be offered us in a proper manner; for if we are, it ſhews that we are full of ourſelves, and too much taken with the admiration of our own attainments, and ſo are far from being poor in ſpirit. One of that character is ſo far from being puffed up with high thoughts of himſelf, that he is not

SERM. VIII.

not much moved when others ſpeak meanly of him, though without cauſe; he is pleaſed and ſatisfied, as he may lawfully be, that he has ſome excellency or good qualification, without being proud or affected, or making a vain oſtentation of it. And as he is not puffed up with a fond opinion of his parts, ſo neither is he with his ſtate and condition; he is not proud of his riches, he does not think he has thereby a right to deſpiſe and contemn thoſe who are under him, but he condeſcends to men of low eſtate, and is kind, courteous, affable and reſpectful to his inferiors. In ſhort, a man who is poor in ſpirit, ſees and acknowledges his own deficiencies, and whatever his endowments are, or whatever his condition be, he is not puffed up, is not wiſe in his own eyes, nor righteous in his own ſight, nor great in his own eſteem; according to the apoſtle's words, *Rom.* xii. 16. *Be of the ſame mind one towards another, mind not high things, but condeſcend to men of low eſtate; be not wiſe in your own conceits.*

III. We are to conſider the temper of thoſe who are poor in ſpirit, as oppoſed to ambition, and aſpiring or hunting after honour, dignity and power amongſt men. This is called the pride of life, by the apoſtle *John*, which therefore muſt certainly be inconſiſtent with true humility and lowlineſs of mind. The diſciples of Chriſt muſt not

aim

aim at greatneſs and power in the world; Chriſt taught them, that he that was greateſt amongſt them ſhould be ſervant to the reſt, and himſelf ſet them an example of it; it would therefore very ill ſuit with their character, who are thus to humble themſelves, to court worldly honour, grandeur and dominion: Not but that a diſciple of Chriſt may lawfully execute the office of a magiſtrate or civil governor; but there is a great deal of difference between accepting of this when called to it, or even ſeeking after it, with a deſign purely to do good, and being ambitious of it, only for the ſake of the power, honour and grandeur that attends it. The former is very conſiſtent with chriſtian humility, or being poor in ſpirit, but the latter is not; as may be ſeen, *Matt.* xviii. 1, 2, 3, 4. *At the ſame time came the diſciples unto Jeſus, ſaying, Who is the greateſt in the kingdom of heaven.* (Another evangeliſt tells us, that they had *diſputed among themſelves by the way, which of them ſhould be the greateſt.* They had entertained the notion of a temporal kingdom to be ſet up by our Saviour, as all the *Jews* believed the kingdom of the Meſſiah would be, and they thought, that they, being his firſt diſciples and followers, ſhould be preferred before every body elſe, and be chief miniſters of ſtate in that kingdom, which they thought was to lord it over all the world. But ſee how

SERM. VIII.

SERM. VIII. how excellently our bleſſed Lord corrects their miſtaken notions, though at that time, it had little effect upon them.) *And Jeſus called a little child unto him, and ſet him in the midſt of them, and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, except ye be converted,* i. e. from this ambitious and worldly temper, *and become as little children,* or like them who have no ambition, no worldly views or deſigns, *ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whoſoever therefore ſhall humble himſelf as this little child,* or be as free from ambition and deſire of worldly grandeur, *the ſame is greateſt in the kingdom of heaven.* Thus then the truly poor in ſpirit, are free from ambition, from aſpiring after worldly greatneſs, and courting honour amongſt men. They have ſo great a value for the honour that cometh from God only, that they very little regard the honour of men, and their hearts are ſo ſet on the heavenly kingdom and crown of glory that fadeth not away, that power and dignity, and grandeur in the world, appear to them very inconſiderable things. They are content to move in a low ſphere, and have no reliſh for worldly pomp and greatneſs; and can ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſ.* cxxxi. 1, 2. *Lord my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exerciſe myſelf in great matters, or in things that are too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted*

quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother; my soul is even as a weaned child. SERM. VIII.

IV. The temper of mind expressed in this phrase, the poor in spirit, may be considered as opposed to the inordinate love of wealth or worldly possessions. Wealth is that which answers all things in this world, or relating to the body, which procures all manner of gratifications, furnishes all kinds of worldly pleasure, and gains honour, esteem, and power in the world; and therefore it is that men so generally covet after it, and are so indefatigable in the pursuit of it; and it is certain that worldly minded men place all their happiness in it. But it is far otherwise with those who are truly poor in spirit; they place their felicity in other more durable enjoyments, and so have their minds as far as their case will permit, disengaged from those vain perishing things, set light by them, and are, comparatively, very indifferent about them. They do, indeed, with *Agur*, desire a competency, but beyond that, are not much concerned. If they are rich in this world, they trust not in those uncertain riches, but in the living God: Their possessions do not make them high-minded, do not make them have ever the higher opinion of themselves, or ever the meaner of other men; but they condescend to men of low estate, and carry themselves courteously, affably and gently towards the meanest

SERM. VIII.

eſt of mankind. They do not contemn nor deſpiſe the poor members of Chriſt's body, but acknowledge them for their brethren, and with all humility, treat them as ſuch, and are willing and ready to leave all their poſſeſſions for Chriſt's ſake. And if the poor in ſpirit, are alſo poor in this world, they are ſatisfied that *they are rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which God hath promiſed to them that love him.* They have learnt with St. *Paul, in whatever ſtate they are to be therewith content:* They know *how to ſuffer need* as well as *how to abound*; they envy not the rich man in his poſſeſſions, his fine gardens, ſtately houſes and rich furniture; but placing their chief happineſs in God, and ſetting their affections on things above, they are very eaſy without thoſe earthly advantages and accommodations. As Providence has placed them in a low condition in the world, they do not murmur or repine at it, but are content to be inferior to other men. If they have an opportunity put into their hands of gaining more of the good things of this life, they will thankfully make uſe of it; but if not, they contentedly reſign themſelves to the will of God, and are very eaſy in his diſpoſal of their affairs, as knowing that he will cauſe all things to work together for their good. They make not haſte to be rich in an unlawful way, and are not diſcontented and uneaſy with their preſent

ſent ſtate, raiſing their minds beyond the periſhing enjoyments of this world to the true riches of the heavenly kingdom. They are contented to ſuffer want and the loſs of all worldly things for Chriſt's ſake, as *knowing that they have in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance.* They are not captivated with an inordinate love of the world, but exerciſe a holy contempt of it, and ſet not their affections on things on the earth, and ſo have an even and quiet temper of mind in all ſtates and conditions, being neither puffed up in proſperity, nor caſt down in adverſity and want. The poverty of this world will be patiently borne by one who is poor in ſpirit, his mind being prepared as well for that as all other circumſtances. SERM. VIII.

Thus we ſee who are the poor in ſpirit, whom Chriſt pronounces bleſſed. My next work will be, to conſider that wherein their bleſſedneſs conſiſts, *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*; which, with the application, muſt be left to another diſcourſe.

And now let us all endeavour to be of this character, to be lowly in heart and humble in ſpirit, and to diſcover this temper in our whole converſation, walking humbly with God, and behaving with humility towards men, and being patient and content in every ſtate: For *bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

SERMON IX.

Humility and Meekneſs Chriſtian Virtues.

MATT. v. 3.

Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

SERM. IX.

IN treating on theſe words, I propoſed to conſider,

I. The character of the perſons, who are here pronounced bleſſed, or happy by our Saviour, *the poor in ſpirit.*

II. That wherein their bleſſedneſs conſiſts, *Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

I. As to the character of the perſons, *the poor in ſpirit*, I endeavoured to ſet that before you in its proper light in my foregoing diſcourſe. I ſhewed you that it was a *Hebrew* phraſe, and ſeems to be taken by our Lord from the old Teſtament; and by comparing it with the ſame, or like phraſes there,

I think it plainly appeared, that by the *poor in ſpirit*, we were to underſtand ſuch as are of a truly humble and lowly ſpirit, who are not confident and preſumptuous, not ſelf-conceited or high-minded; not proud and haughty, arrogant and ambitious, nor of a worldly, vain-glorious, aſpiring temper; not elevated or puffed up, whatever their circumſtances or abilities are, but modeſt in their opinion of themſelves, low in their own eyes, humble in heart towards God, and towards all men, and patient and contented, how mean or afflictive ſoever their condition be in this world. I ſhall juſt repeat the paſſages then quoted to make out this ſenſe, *Iſa.* lxvi. 2. *For all thoſe things hath mine hand made, and all thoſe things have been, ſaith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him, that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and that trembleth at my word:* Here I obſerved, that we might read the words thus, To him that is of a poor and contrite ſpirit; or, To the poor and contrite in ſpirit: And ſo the phraſe is exactly the ſame with that in our text, only the word contrite is joined with it. And to ſhew that *humble in ſpirit*, was meant by *poor in ſpirit*, I compared this with a parallel place in *Iſa.* lvii. 15. *For thus ſaith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit,* SERM. IX.

SERM. IX.

rit, or is contrite and humble in ſpirit, *to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* Here we have *contrite in ſpirit*, as in the forecited paſſage, and *humble in ſpirit*, plainly anſwers to *poor in ſpirit*, which muſt therefore ſignify the the ſame thing. The other paſſages cited to confirm this ſenſe, were, *Prov.* xvi. 19. *Better is it to be of an* humble ſpirit *with the lowly, than to divide the ſpoil with the proud.* Prov. xxix. 23. *A man's pride ſhall bring him low, but honour ſhall uphold the* humble in ſpirit. And *Matt.* xi. 29. where our Saviour ſays, *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and* lowly in heart. As the word tranſlated lowly, when alone, ſignifies one in a poor, mean and low condition, but when joined with heart, as here, *lowly in heart*, one of a truly humble and lowly mind; ſo the word poor, which by itſelf expreſſes only a man's outward circumſtances, when joined with ſpirit, as in our text, *poor in ſpirit*, muſt be ſuppoſed to ſignify a truly humble man, who has mean, low and abaſing thoughts of himſelf, who thinks not more highly of himſelf than he ought to think, but forms a ſober and modeſt opinion of himſelf, and of all his endowments and qualifications, who is neither puffed up in proſperity, nor impatient, uneaſy and diſcontented in low circumſtances, who is void of the pride of life, and a ſtranger to all aſpiring thoughts

thoughts and ambitious deſires, who is neither worldly nor high-minded, but maintains an even temper of mind, and a juſt indifferency in every ſtate, and is of an humble ſpirit towards God and man, not ſcorning to exerciſe condeſcenſion towards his inferiors, be their circumſtances ever ſo mean, nor diſdaining to expreſs all due deference towards thoſe who are in any reſpect his inferiors. This is the man who is *poor in ſpirit*; which character we more particularly conſidered, 1. As it includes our humility with regard to the divine Being. 2. As oppoſed to ſelf-conceit and a high opinion of ourſelves on any account. 3. As oppoſed to ambition, and aſpiring after honour, dignity and power amongſt men. And, 4. As oppoſed to an inordinate love of wealth and worldly poſſeſſions. SERM. IX.

1. I conſidered this temper of mind as it includes humility towards the divine Being. Thus we ſhould always humbly acknowledge our neceſſary dependence on him for our very being and every thing we enjoy; we ſhould look upon ourſelves as nothing without him, and as miſerable without his favour, and in all the comforts we partake of, ſhould ſay, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory:* And as we neceſſarily depend on him, we ſhould humbly look up to him for all ſuitable aids and ſupplies both for our natural and ſpiritual

SERM. IX. life, and ſhould with all lowlineſs of mind have all our expectation from him, and according to *Solomon*'s advice, ſhould *truſt in the Lord with all* our *heart, and lean not to* our own *underſtanding*. We ſhould be ſenſible of our wants and infirmities, and that our help is in God alone. We ſhould alſo be truely humbled before God, in a ſenſe of our manifold ſins againſt him, and our great unworthineſs to receive any good things from him; ſhould humbly confeſs our tranſgreſſions unto him, and with the moſt lowly devotion of mind, implore the forgiveneſs of them. The penitent publican in the parable, truly repreſents one who is poor in ſpirit, *Luke* xviii. 13. *He ſtanding afar off, would not lift up ſo much as his eyes to heaven, but ſmote upon his breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me a ſinner.* A man who is thus truly poor in ſpirit, does alſo humble himſelf under the divine chaſtiſements; he patiently ſubmits to them, and humbly reſigns himſelf to the will and diſpoſal of the Almighty; he acknowledges he is puniſhed leſs than his iniquities have deſerved, patiently bears the divine hand, and has the moſt humble and reverential regard to the divine inſtruction from thence.

2*dly*, We conſidered the temper of mind recommended in our text, as oppoſed to ſelf-conceit and a too high opinion of ourſelves on any account. They who are poor in ſpirit,

rit, think modeſtly and ſoberly of themſelves, and of the qualifications they are endowed with. They do not arrogate to themſelves what they really have not, nor think themſelves wiſer and better than they really are. They have not ſo conceited an opinion of their own wiſdom and prudence, as to think they can never ſtand in need of the advice and direction of others; they are not ſo righteous in their own eyes, as to fancy themſelves better than every body elſe, or to deſpiſe and contemn their neighbours, as the proud, ſelf-righteous Phariſee did; nor however proſperous their worldly circumſtances are, do they think themſelves ſo raiſed above others, as to look down upon them with contempt, or treat them with haughtineſs and ſcorn. On the contrary, the truly poor in ſpirit, think modeſtly of themſelves in every condition, and however accompliſhed they may be, how great ſoever their internal or external qualifications and advantages are, they are not puffed up, but are void of all high, ſwelling, conceited thoughts of themſelves, and free from all vain elation of mind. SERM. IX.

3*dly*, The character in our text was conſidered as oppoſed to an ambitious temper of mind, to aſpiring after worldly greatneſs and authority, and courting honour amongſt men. Thoſe chriſtians who are truly poor in ſpirit, have, after the example of our Sa-

SERM. IX. viour, ſo great a value for the honour that cometh from God only, that they very little regard the honour of men; and their hearts are ſo ſet on the heavenly kingdom, and the crown of glory that fadeth not away, that power, and dignity, and grandeur in the world, appear to them very inconſiderable things. They are content to move in a low ſphere, and have no reliſh for worldly pomp and greatneſs; and if they ſhould happen to be raiſed to it, they will not be puffed up, nor will they make any farther account of it, than as it gives them an opportunity of being the more ſerviceable to their fellow creatures, and doing the greater good to mankind. Our Saviour eſteems thoſe to be the greateſt in his kingdom, who become the greateſt ſervants to their fellow chriſtians; and this is the temper of thoſe who are truly poor in ſpirit. Inſtead of aiming at power and authority over others, and deſiring to bear a great ſway in the world, or in the church; they condeſcend to men of low eſtate, and count it their greateſt happineſs to be ſerviceable even to the meaneſt of mankind, however others may think it below their character and ſtation, and count it an abaſing and leſſening of themſelves ſo to do.

4thly, We conſidered the temper of thoſe who are poor in ſpirit, as oppoſed to the inordinate love of wealth, and worldly poſſeſſions.

SERM. IX.

ſeſſions. Such perſons place their felicity in other more durable enjoyments, and ſo have their minds as far as their ſtate here will permit, diſengaged from thoſe vain periſhing things, ſet light by them, and are comparatively very indifferent about them. If they are rich in this world, they truſt not in thoſe uncertain riches, but in the living God; and if they are poor and in low circumſtances, they are ſatisfied, ſeeing they are *rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God has promiſed to them that love him.* They count themſelves happy only in being rich towards God; and without this, how great worldly treaſure ſoever they heap up, they are ſenſible they ſhall be in a moſt miſerable condition.

Having thus ſhewn who are poor in ſpirit, whom our Lord pronounces bleſſed, I come now,

II. To conſider wherein their bleſſedneſs does conſiſt, which is expreſſed in theſe words, *For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* The kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, (for they are ſynonymous expreſſions) has two ſignifications in ſcripture. 1. We are frequently to underſtand by it, the kingdom of the Meſſiah in this world, with all the laws and precepts, and all the benefits and privileges thereof, or in other words, the gracious diſpenſation of the goſpel, which our bleſſed Saviour came into the

SERM. IX. the world to erect and eſtabliſh. In this ſenſe we are to take it, when it is ſaid, *the kingdom of heaven is at hand*, *the kingdom of God is within you*, or among you, *the kingdom of God is come unto you*, and the like; as alſo when our Saviour and his apoſtles, are ſaid *to preach the goſpel of the kingdom*, *the goſpel of the kingdom of God*, and *the kingdom of God*. Thus we are to underſtand it, where it is ſaid, *the Jews thought the kingdom of God ſhould immediately appear*, and this is meant by it in moſt of our Lord's parables, when he likens the kingdom of heaven to ſuch and ſuch things: And indeed, this is the import of the expreſſion in moſt places of the goſpels. The Meſſiah was propheſied of, under the character of *a king or prince*, and it was ſaid, that *he ſhould have a kingdom given to him*. Therefore by *the kingdom*, in a peculiar ſenſe, the *Jews* underſtood the reign and government of the Meſſiah; and it is called the *kingdom of heaven*, and the *kingdom of God*, becauſe the God of heaven appointed and gave it to him. Thus *Pſ.* ii. 10. *Yet have I ſet* my king *upon my holy hill of Zion*. And *Daniel* ſays, *There was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom*, Dan. vii. 14. And our Saviour expreſſes himſelf thus to his diſciples, *I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me*. Thus then the kingdom of heaven, ſignifies the kingdom of the Meſſiah

ſiah in this world, which God ſet up by him, in order to reduce men to obedience and ſubjection to his holy will and authority, to the true ſpiritual worſhip of himſelf, and the exerciſe of piety and virtue, and as a means of conferring all ſpiritual bleſſings upon them; for this kingdom is not of this world, is not a worldly adminiſtration, but is a ſpiritual kingdom, as are alſo the rules and laws and privileges of it, which are contained in the new Teſtament, and were publiſhed by Chriſt himſelf and his apoſtles. 2*dly*, In many places of the new Teſtament, by the kingdom of God, or of heaven, we are undoubtedly to underſtand the heavenly kingdom, or the kingdom of glory, the ſtate of everlaſting happineſs into which the righteous ſhall be admitted, and the eternal reward of glory prepared for them in heaven. Thus *Mat.* v. 10. *Bleſſed are they that are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* That by the kingdom of heaven, we are here to underſtand the kingdom of glory above, may appear from the 12th verſe, *Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for ſo perſecuted they the prophets which were before you.* So *Matt.* vii. 21. *Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* The following words ſhew plainly what is here meant

SERM. IX.

SERM. IX. meant by the kingdom of heaven: *Many will ſay unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name, and in thy name have caſt out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you, depart from me all ye that work iniquity:* Which is plainly ſpoken of the future ſtate. See alſo *Luke* xii 32. where our Lord ſays to his diſciples, *Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleaſure to give you the kingdom.* To the ſame purpoſe it is ſaid, *Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father*, Matt. xiii. 43. And in this ſenſe, it ſeems, we are to underſtand the words, 1 *Cor.* vi. 10. *Know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God?* And *Gal.* v. 21. —— *of the which I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in time paſt, that they which do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God.* And thus we read of the heavenly kingdom, 2 *Tim.* iv. 18. *And the Lord ſhall deliver me from every evil work, and ſhall preſerve me unto his heavenly kingdom.* Now, as in many places of ſcripture, by the kingdom of heaven, we are to underſtand the coming of the Meſſiah, to erect his kingdom in this world, or the diſpenſation of the goſpel, and in others, the kingdom of glory, or the ſtate of the bleſſed in the world to come; ſo elſewhere the expreſſion is ambiguous, and may ſignify

ſignify either the one or the other, or both may be included in it. Thus in our text, where it is ſaid, *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*; though it be uncertain which was principally intended by our Saviour, the ſpiritual kingdom he was to ſet up by his preaching in this world, or the ſtate of eternal happineſs and glory, which the good and righteous ſhall enjoy in the heavenly kingdom hereafter, yet it may be truly ſaid of the poor in ſpirit, *that theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, in both ſenſes. SERM. IX.

1ſt, Then, the poor in ſpirit are bleſſed, becauſe the kingdom of the Meſſiah in this world, or the gracious diſpenſation of the goſpel, belongs to them. They only are prepared and diſpoſed to enter into this kingdom, they only are the true and proper ſubjects of it, and they alone can enjoy the bleſſings and privileges thereof. The poor in ſpirit are of a teachable diſpoſition, and apt to receive inſtruction when it is offered to them; and when ſo heavenly and divine a doctrine as that of our Saviour is ſet before them, they will with all readineſs of mind embrace the ſame. They have nothing in them that is contrary to this doctrine, no worldly views but in ſubordination to piety and virtue, no high and conceited thoughts of their own wiſdom and attainments, no eager deſires after the honours and riches of this world; and

SERM. IX.

and ſo that holy religion which teaches men to deny themſelves, to ſet light by the things of this world, and to have a ſuperior regard to the bleſſings of a future life, will meet with a ready and grateful reception from them. It is no wonder that men of worldly minds, of ambitious deſires, and of a proud, ſelf-conceited, ſelf-righteous diſpoſition, ſhould reject that doctrine which teaches them humbly to acknowledge and repent of their ſins, to *be ſpiritually minded*, to live *as ſtrangers and pilgrims* in the world, not to *love the world, nor the things that are in the world*, as *the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life*, but to mortify all ſuch deſires, and bring down all ſuch high thoughts: Whilſt they continue of ſuch a temper, they cannot embrace ſuch a holy and ſpiritual inſtitution in ſincerity; but their minds will be alienated from it, and they will have no manner of inclination towards it. Thus the proud and worldly phariſees, who had ſo high an opinion of themſelves, who were ſo wiſe and holy in their own eyes, *who truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others*, who ſought for praiſe and honour amongſt men, and were worldly minded and vain-glorious; always oppoſed the pure and ſpiritual doctrine of the goſpel, which was perfectly agreeable to him who delivered it, who was *meek and lowly in heart*. They rejected the counſel of God againſt them-

themselves, they reproached and derided our blessed Saviour, and were so far from believing on him, or heartily embracing his doctrine, that they persecuted him and sought to destroy him. And indeed, as our Lord says, how could they believe, *who received honour one of another, and sought not the honour that comes from God only*, John v. 45. Thus also the evangelist tells us, that the reason why those rulers who were convinced of the truth of our Saviour's doctrine, did not confess him, was, because *they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God*, they were fond of applause and honour amongst men, and attached to worldly greatness, and therefore could not endure to submit to that religion, which taught them so great humility and self-denial. So true is that saying of our Saviour, *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*; as indeed we cannot, unless we are free from pride, ambition and worldly mindedness, as they are. But if we are so humble and lowly and disinterested, our temper of mind being agreeable to the religion of the gospel, we shall readily fall in with it, and heartily embrace it. God designed his gospel for such persons, and not at all for the proud and worldly, and ambitious, and self-conceited, whilst they continue such; and therefore he has entirely suited and adapted it to

SERM. IX.

SERM. IX. the former, and of conſequence it cannot be agreeable to the temper of the latter; who cannot therefore receive it in ſincerity, whilſt they remain of ſuch a temper, though the others certainly will; ſee for this purpoſe, *Matt.* xi 25. *At that time Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent*; or, that having hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, ſuch as are poſſeſſed of carnal worldly wiſdom, or are wiſe in their own eyes, thou *haſt revealed them unto babes*, the humble and lowly minded, who are as little children, void of ſelf-conceit, worldly wiſdom, ambition or deſire of vain-glory. Our Saviour concludes, *Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight*; this muſt be agreeable to his mind and will, who *reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace*, or ſheweth favour *to the humble*. And God is ſaid to hide the goſpel from the wiſe and prudent in their own conceit, not becauſe he has not made it known to them, but becauſe he has contrived it to be of ſuch a nature, that whilſt perſons continue ſo, they will not, they cannot heartily embrace it, and give themſelves up to the direction of it. And he is ſaid to *reveal it to babes*, the humble and lowly in their own eyes, becauſe it is ſo ſuited to their temper and diſpoſition, that they will readily embrace it when made known to them

them. Thus then it may be truly ſaid of *the poor in ſpirit*, that *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, or the kingdom of the Meſſiah, becauſe their humility rendering them teachable, ſubmiſſive and obedient, prepares them to enter into this kingdom; and, I may add farther, makes them true and faithful ſubjects of it, or living members of Chriſt's body. And the bleſſings and privileges of this kingdom, as remiſſion of ſins, and the like, belong only to the humble, penitent contrite man, *Luke* iv. 18. *The ſpirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach the goſpel to the poor*, i. e. the poor in ſpirit, *he hath ſent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of ſight to the blind, to ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed.* SERM. IX.

2. The poor in ſpirit are bleſſed, becauſe *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, i. e. the kingdom of glory, or ſtate of eternal life and happineſs in the world to come. The kingdom of the Meſſiah terminates in this; conſequently, they who are the real and ſincere ſubjects of his kingdom here, will undoubtedly have a ſhare in the glorious kingdom above. And as the poor in ſpirit, the truly humble and lowly minded, are prepared to enter into Chriſt's kingdom on earth, and are true and real ſubjects of it, ſo they are prepared for the heavenly kingdom, and will, without doubt, obtain an entrance into it.

SERM. IX. Humility, or lowlineſs of mind towards God and men, is neceſſary to the practice of all other virtues, and prepares and diſpoſes us to the exerciſe thereof; it makes thoſe things, thoſe worldly concerns, which would otherwiſe be a temptation to us, and hinder us in the way of our duty, to have very little influence upon us, and cauſes us to value above all things the divine approbation: It makes us regardleſs of all earthly conſiderations, of riches, honour and praiſe among men, when they ſtand in competition with our duty, as they often may, and renders perſons ſuſceptible of good advice and inſtruction. The poor in ſpirit are teachable and governable, being not puffed up with an opinion of their own wiſdom; and having the greateſt regard to the honour that comes from God only, they ſeek above all things to pleaſe him, and by the practice of holineſs, righteouſneſs and goodneſs, to ſecure his approbation. Now, as holineſs is the only way to happineſs, and the promiſe of eternal life and glory is made to the humble penitent, who is ſo ſorry for his ſins as to forſake them, which is one property of the poor in ſpirit; and to ſuch as endeavour to pleaſe God, which the truly humble alone are ſincerely inclined to, they, and they only, are the perſons who, according to his promiſe, will ſecure to themſelves a title to that eternal life, glory and bleſſedneſs. Thus then the kingdom of glory in

the world to come belongs to the poor in ſpirit, and they will undoubtedly be raiſed to a ſhare in it. How happy and bleſſed then muſt they be? For this kingdom, as has been ſaid, is that ſtate of eternal life and happineſs which God has prepared for them that love him, to be enjoyed after this life. And who can expreſs, or conceive the happineſs and glory of this ſtate, when the poor in ſpirit ſhall be delivered from all manner of evil, from all ſorrow and affliction, and ſhall be exalted to the poſſeſſion of the higheſt felicity, in the enjoyment of God's favourable preſence, and that for ever. Thus we ſee the bleſſedneſs of thoſe who are poor in ſpirit; *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, the kingdom of the Meſſiah here, and of glory hereafter. And this is agreeable to many other expreſſions of ſcripture, wherein God's peculiar reſpect and regard is expreſſed to the humble perſon. Thus it is ſaid, *He reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace*, or favour, *to the humble*. And in the forecited paſſages from *Iſaiah*, God ſays, *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and contrite in ſpirit, and trembleth at my word.* And, *That he dwells with him who is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* And thus our Saviour ſays more than once, *He that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed, but he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.*

SERM. IX.

SERM. IX. Having thus conſidered theſe words of our Saviour, I ſhall now conclude with a word or two of application.

1. Hereby we ſee that, in conferring the bleſſing of the goſpel, God does not regard the outward circumſtances of perſons with reſpect to the things of this life, but the temper and diſpoſition of their minds. As he does not reſpect the perſon of the rich, ſo neither does he of the poor. He does indeed conſider the ſtate of thoſe who are oppreſſed with power, and will, no doubt, make all reaſonable allowances for them in the next life. But, as to an actual ſhare in the benefits of the goſpel, poverty no more entitles a man to it than riches. In ſhort, it matters not whether a man be rich or poor in this world, ſo he be but poor in ſpirit; tho' it muſt be acacknowledged, that, upon many accounts, it is more difficult for a rich man to preſerve this temper of mind, than for one that is poor.

2. We may ſee from what has been ſaid, that this temper of mind, which our Saviour intends by being poor in ſpirit, is truly nobleneſs of ſpirit. By *the poor in ſpirit* we are not to underſtand perſons of a mean and ſordid ſpirit, ſuch as by any conſideration are induced to do what is really unfitting, and does not become them as rational creatures, who ſtoop to any little, mean and ſordid tricks for their worldly advantage, and baſely flatter men in power, and ſervilely contribute

bute to bring about their ill deſigns thro' fear or deſire of gain, or any ſuch low, mean and unworthy principles or motives. But, on the contrary, *the poor in ſpirit* are ſuch as are truly humbled for their ſins againſt God, and walk humbly before him, and have his fear prevailing in their hearts beyond all other conſiderations; as are not vainly puffed up with any imaginary or real excellency, whether internal or external, but think ſoberly and modeſtly of themſelves, and their attainments and qualifications; who are not of an ambitious and worldly temper, but prefer in their hearts the honour that comes from God only, and the joys of an eternal ſtate, before the vain pomp and pleaſures of a tranſitory and periſhing world. And certainly nothing can be more agreeable to right reaſon, nothing expreſſes a truer greatneſs and nobleneſs of mind than this; as it is moſt unreaſonable and abſurd for ſuch dependent, indigent, unworthy creatures as we, in ſuch a vain and periſhing ſtate, to be proud, and haughty, and conceited of our own abilities, and greedy after ſuch tranſitory honours and enjoyments as thoſe of this world are. SERM. IX.

3. We may hence ſee what good reaſon our Lord had to begin his ſermon with declaring the bleſſedneſs of the poor in ſpirit, ſeeing this diſpoſition of mind is a needful propogation to all chriſtian virtue, and abſo-

SERM. IX. lutely neceſſary to the practice of the ſeveral parts of it, eſpecially to thoſe he mentions in the verſes immediately following. We cannot mourn for our ſins as we ought, unleſs we are poor in ſpirit, unleſs our hearts are truly humble under a ſenſe of them. Meekneſs and gentleneſs towards all men is inſeparably joined with this temper of mind, and meekneſs and forbearance are altogether inconſiſtent with pride and haughtineſs; therefore the wiſe man oppoſes them one to the other, when he ſays, *The patient in ſpirit*, i. e. the meek and gentle, *is better than the proud in ſpirit*. And humility and meekneſs are joined together by the apoſtle, *Eph.* iv. 2. *With all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in love.* They who are righteous in their own eyes will not hunger and thirſt after true righteouſneſs, but they who are ſenſible of their defects herein, and convinced of the neceſſity of it, as the poor in ſpirit are, will certainly with the utmoſt diligence apply themſelves to the purſuit of it. Humility is alſo neceſſary to mercy and charity, and therefore it is ſaid, that *charity vaunteth not itſelf, is not puffed up.* This humble diſpoſition of mind is an inſeparable propagator of true charity, nor can we be truly merciful and charitable without it; and therefore it is frequently joined with it in ſcripture; particularly, *Col.* iii. 12. *Put*

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on therefore, (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering, &c. Nor can we be pure in heart, ſincere, and void of all corrupt and perverſe principles, without being poor in ſpirit, and preſerving true humility of heart. And nothing tends more to peace and concord among men than humility and lowlineſs of mind; as nothing is more apt to inflame mens breaſts on every little occaſion with anger and reſentment, and to create animoſities and contention amongſt them, than pride, ambition, and the like; therefore *Solomon* ſays, *He that is proud of heart ſtirreth up ſtrife*, Prov. xxviii. 25. And in another place, *Proud and haughty ſcorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath*; ſo far is a proud perſon from being a peace-maker. SERM. IX.

Finally, A man who is of a proud diſpoſition, who is high-minded, worldly and ambitious, is not very likely to be willing to ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake; but he who is poor in ſpirit, who is humble and lowly minded, who has a mean regard to all the riches and honours of this life, and ſets his affection on things above, and the ſtate of eternal happineſs and glory hereafter to be enjoyed by the righteous; ſuch a perſon, I ſay, will be willing to ſuffer any thing, even death itſelf, when called to it, for the ſake of Chriſt and his goſpel, which gives him the promiſe of that glorious life.

SERM. IX.

Thus then we ſee how neceſſary this temper of mind is to the diſcharge of all chriſtian duties. Let us all therefore, whatever our outward condition be, whatever our attainments and qualifications are, ſeriouſly endeavour to preſerve true humility of mind, or to be poor in ſpirit. Let thoſe who are rich in this world give ſpecial heed to this, foraſmuch as they are in moſt danger of having their minds corrupted in this reſpect, and falling into the contrary temper of pride, ambition, haughtineſs and contempt of others, or of covetouſneſs and worldly mindedneſs. Many, inſtead of being poor in ſpirit, are poor ſpirited, or narrow ſpirited, whereas they ought to do good, to be rich in good works, to be ready to diſtribute, and willing to communicate. This is the beſt diſcovery of ſuch perſons being poor in ſpirit, the beſt proof and demonſtration of it. And then as to thoſe who are poor in this world, they ought to look upon godlineſs with contentment to be great gain; and therefore ſhould be contented with their condition, as knowing that *God has choſen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of that glorious kingdom he has promiſed to thoſe that love him.* Finally, let us all endeavour to be poor in ſpirit, and humble in heart towards God and all men, and ſpiritually and heavenly minded, inſtead of worldly minded, that ſo being prepared,

pared, and truly disposed for the exercise of all christian virtues, we may, in the sincere practice thereof, have true comfort and satisfaction in our minds here, and at last be exalted to the possession and enjoyment of eternal life and glory in heaven; for *blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* SERM. IX.

SER-

SERMON X.

The Fruits of the Spirit.

GALAT. v. 22, 23.

But the fruit of the ſpirit is love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith, meekneſs, temperance: Againſt ſuch there is no law.

SERM. X.

AS in the beginning of chriſtianity the unbelieving *Jews* were the moſt violent perſecutors of Chriſt's diſciples, and the moſt zealous oppoſers of the chriſtian faith; ſo thoſe of them who believed, and owned Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, uſually cauſed the greateſt diſturbance and diſorder in the church, whilſt out of an exceſſive veneration for circumciſion, and the other *Jewiſh* ceremonies, they were for mixing *Judaiſm* with chriſtianity, and being not contented with their own practice in this reſpect, they were for impoſing the legal obſervances on the *Gentile* converts, giving out, that unleſs they were circumciſed, and kept the law of *Moſes*, they could not be ſaved; that they could not be

be justified by faith alone, without the deeds of the law, and that they could have no part in the Messiah's kingdom, unless they subjected themselves to *Moses* as well as unto Christ. And as the *Jews* were dispersed thro' most places of the world, so in almost every church of the *Gentiles* there were many of them, some whereof being, as was said, so zealously affected towards the law, caused such differences and disorders upon the account of it in the several churches they belonged to; which the great apostle of the *Gentiles*, in most of his epistles, was concerned to compose and rectify. SERM. X.

Thus in the churches of *Galatia*, who were converted by the apostle's ministry, there were some *Jews* who endeavoured to bring the *Gentile* christians under the *Jewish* yoke, and were for imposing circumcision on them; in which matter they had influenced many of them, and almost corrupted them from the simplicity which is in Christ; and forasmuch as they had a great respect for the apostle who called them unto the grace of Christ, or converted them to christianity, the better to prevail on them to submit to circumcision, these *Jewish* christians insinuated that he was for it also. Thus not only many were turned from the truth of the gospel, but this caused great debates, contentions and divisions among them, and tended to overthrow

SERM. X.

throw that christian charity which they were obliged by the gospel to maintain.

To prevent and cure these evils, the apostle writes this epistle to them, wherein he first defends himself against the foresaid insinuation, *viz.* of his being for circumcision, and shews that it is utterly false and groundless; and then by several arguments he dissuades them from subjecting themselves to the law of *Moses*, and establishes justification by faith, or by the gospel only; and forasmuch as the differences among them had caused great alienation of mind and affection in them one from another, he exhorts them in the end to love and charity, and cautions those who understood their christian liberty, not to use that liberty for an occasion to the flesh, to uncharitableness, strife and disorder, the works of the flesh, but by love to serve one another, seeing all the law was fulfilled in this, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* And, to set forth the evil of hatred, strife and uncharitableness, he gives a catalogue of the works of the flesh, wherein he joins those vices with the most enormous crimes; and to prevail on them to maintain a charitable and loving disposition, he tells them that this, together with other virtues and excellent dispositions, is the fruit of the spirit; *But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: Against such there is no law.*

It

It may be very proper, in the *firſt* place, to conſider what we are to underſtand by *the ſpirit*, which theſe virtues are ſaid to be *the fruit of*. SERM. X.

By *the ſpirit*, the apoſtle ſometimes means the holy ſpirit that was given to all chriſtians, and theſe virtues may be ſaid to be his fruit, inaſmuch as he reneweth our mind, and ſanctifieth us, influences and excites us to, and aſſiſts us in the practice of them. But ſometimes by *the ſpirit* the apoſtle underſtands the goſpel, or the chriſtian religion, which he calls *ſpirit*, in oppoſition to the law or *Jewiſh* oeconomy, which he ſtiles *fleſh*; thus, *Rom.* viii. 8, 9. *So then they that are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God: But ye are not in the fleſh, but in the ſpirit.* It is certain that, *chap.* vii. 5. by being in the fleſh, the apoſtle means being under the law in its carnal and literal ſenſe, without having any regard to Chriſt. And tho' in the foregoing *verſes* of this viiith *chap.* he uſes *fleſh* and *ſpirit* for the two different principles in man, it is very common with the apoſtle, when he has made uſe of a word, to uſe the ſame word preſently after, tho' in ſomewhat a different ſenſe. But it is very plain that by *fleſh and ſpirit*, Gal. iii. 3. are meant the *law and goſpel*; *Are ye ſo fooliſh? having begun in the ſpirit, are ye now made perfect by the fleſh?* The diſpenſation of the law may be called *fleſh*, becauſe it conſiſted moſtly of carnal ordinances,

SERM. X. dinances, of ceremonies and fleſhly rites and obſervances, and the goſpel may be called *ſpirit*, as it contains the ſpiritual meaning of the law, in oppoſition to its carnal and literal ſenſe, 2 *Cor.* iii. 6. *Who alſo hath made us able miniſters of the new teſtament, not of the letter, but of the ſpirit*, i. e. not of the letter of the law, or the bare literal meaning of it, but of the ſpirit of the law, or the ſpiritual ſenſe of it, which is Chriſt or the goſpel, Chriſt being *the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth:* Or the diſpenſation of the goſpel may be called *ſpirit*, becauſe of the plentiful effuſion of the holy ſpirit under it, and the promiſe of its influence and aſſiſtance to them that believe and embrace it. And if we conſider this to be meant by *ſpirit*, it is certain that theſe, and ſuch like, things are the fruit of the goſpel, as it is the deſign of it to promote and propagate theſe virtues; as it every where preſcribes and enjoins them, requires and excites men to the practice of them; as it gives all manner of encouragement to them, and affords all neceſſary influence and aſſiſtance herein; ſo that the goſpel in all reſpects tends to produce theſe excellent effects, and theſe virtues are altogether agreeable to it. But, in the next place, by *the ſpirit*, the apoſtle frequently intends that principle in men, which being renewed and ſtrengthened by the ſpirit of God, and duly attended to, directs, leads and inclines them to

to that which is good; as by *flesh* he often means the oppofite principle, *viz.* thofe irregular paffions, appetites and defires which incline and hurry men on to fin. This is what the apoftle commonly underftands by *flesh* and *fpirit* in moft difcourfes of this nature, and the latter he alfo calls *the fpirit of the mind*, Eph. iv. 23. *And be renewed in the fpirit of your mind*, the inward man, *Rom.* vii. 22. *For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man*, the mind, and the law of the mind, *ver.* 23. *But I fee another law in my members warring againft the law of my mind.* And, *ver.* 25. *So then with the mind I myfelf ferve the law of God.* By thefe expreffions the apoftle means the principle of right reafon, or that principle which underftands, fuggefts, and prompts to what is right, and juft, and good; and he confiders it in chriftians as renewed, fanctified and affifted by the holy fpirit of God. In this fenfe the word *fpirit* is for the moft part to be taken in that difcourfe of the apoftle's which we have *Rom.* viii. and thus it feems moft natural to underftand the word in this place; for by *the flesh*, ver. 19. to whofe works *the fruit of the fpirit* is in our text oppofed, he certainly means the contrary principle, *viz.* all irregular motions, inclinations and habits; and, *ver.* 17. thefe principles are plainly intended, for *the flesh luftetb againft the fpirit, and the fpirit againft the flesh: and thefe are contrary*

SERM. X.

SERM. X.

contrary the one to the other, ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would; or, as it ought to have been rendered, *ſo that ye do not the things that ye would.* Now, if we take the word *ſpirit* in our text in this ſenſe, as is moſt reaſonable, it is certain that theſe virtues, which the apoſtle mentions, are the product of this principle, that they flow from it as their ſource, and are entirely agreeable to it. And we muſt not think that all the fruits of the ſpirit are here ſet down by the apoſtle, for he mentions thoſe only that were moſt ſuitable to his purpoſe; tho' all manner of virtues, all the duties that reſpect God, ourſelves and one another, all piety, holineſs and righteouſneſs, are indeed the fruit of the ſpirit, and the proper effects of a mind renewed by the ſpirit of God; the fruit of the ſpirit is in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth; but our work at this time is to conſider only thoſe virtues here mentioned by the apoſtle, as the fruit of the ſpirit.

I. Therefore the firſt fruit of the ſpirit mentioned by the apoſtle is *love.* Love to God is certainly the fruit of the ſpirit, is agreeable to the higheſt reaſon, and eſpecially required in the goſpel; we ſhould *love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our ſoul, with all our mind, and with all our ſtrength:* But here we are to underſtand the apoſtle of love to men, as the word *love*, or *charity*,

charity, put abſolutely, does moſt commonly ſignify; and that the apoſtle means charity or love to men, may appear, if we conſider his deſign of making mention of it after this manner, he was ſpeaking to them who were divided in their affections, whoſe diſſenſions and diſputes had cauſed ſtrifes and animoſities amongſt them, and who upon this account began to be at enmity one with another, and to bite and devour one another; and his deſign was to let them know how contrary this diſpoſition and temper of mind was to the temper and ſpirit of the goſpel, and how diſagreeable to a mind renewed by the holy ſpirit, whereupon he tells them, that *the fruit of the ſpirit was love*, which was quite contrary to that hatred, envy and ſtrife which was beginning to be among them, which were no other than the fruits of the fleſh. Thus the apoſtle in the precedent verſes exhorts them to love one another, and warns them of the danger of the contrary diſpoſition, *ver.* 13, &c. *Uſe not liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh, but by love ſerve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not conſumed one of another. This I ſay then, walk in the ſpirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſt of the fleſh*, &c. I ſhall not ſtand to explain this virtue of charity, every one knows what it is to love

SERM. X.

SERM. X. himself, and how he is influenced by this love; and he ought to love his neighbour as himself, to maintain such a good-will and affection to him as to himself, and to discover it in the like instances upon all occasions. The properties of this virtue, of this good-will and affection, and kind disposition, are set down by the apostle, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 4,—7. It is often used for the whole of our duty towards our neighbour, and contains some of the virtues that follow in our text, two of which are expressly mentioned by the apostle as the properties of charity, when he says, *charity suffereth long, and is kind.* But we are not now to consider these under this head. Charity is most expressly commanded, most strictly and frequently enjoined in the gospel; it was the design of the gospel to recommend and promote it; it is agreeable to the dictates of reason, and is the true christian spirit. The apostle exhorts above all things *to put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.* Charity is to be extended to all men, even to our enemies; and we are especially exhorted to maintain it towards our christian brethren; our Saviour most earnestly requires it, and his apostles, by his direction, frequently recommend it in the strongest manner, we should love one another with a pure heart fervently, and should *walk in love, as Christ loved us.*

II. The

II. The second fruit of the spirit mentioned by the apostle is *joy*, a calm and cheaful disposition, a glad and joyful temper of mind. The gospel affords the best grounds for joy and gladness, and the new creation spoken of by the apostle, tends every where to secure it. A christian by subduing his lusts and irregular passions, frees his mind from the greatest disturbance and uneasiness, and by acquiring virtuous habits and dispositions, lays a foundation for solid comfort and joy, and for a happy, calm and chearful mind. Joy is a very desirable thing, and that which all men would willingly possess; but there is no joy so excellent as the spiritual joy of a christian. Worldly joy is very mean, uncertain and transitory, and of little account; but the true, valuable, solid and lasting joy, is that of a good man, who rejoices in God, in a sense of his favour, and in hope of his glory. Holy habits and dispositions which are the fruit of the spirit, of a mind renewed and sanctified by the spirit of God, naturally cause this happy temper, this serene, calm and chearful frame; and those that are truly religious, that fear and love God, and obey all his commandments, and walk after the spirit, will experience a sensible pleasure, arising from the conformity to the divine will and will have the highest joy and satfsfaction from a sense of their Maker's approbation. The SERM. X.

SERM. X. divine promiſes in the goſpel of pardon and future happineſs to all who repent and turn to God, who forſake the works of the fleſh, and walk after the ſpirit, are matter of the higheſt joy and ſatisfaction to all ſuch perſons: And the holy ſpirit of God that dwells in the faithful, cauſes the greateſt peace and tranquillity in their minds; they have the higheſt joy ariſing from his divine conſolations. The kingdom of God conſiſts among other things, of joy in the Holy Ghoſt. They who received the word with much affliction, nevertheleſs received it with joy of the Holy Ghoſt. Chriſtians are exhorted to maintain this holy joy, 1 *Theſſ.* v. 16. *Rejoice evermore.* Phil. iv. 4. *Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I ſay rejoice.* Thus the fruit of the ſpirit is joy; whereas ſorrow, uneaſineſs, anxiety and miſery is the fruit of the fleſh. As thoſe who follow the luſts of the fleſh, cauſe trouble and uneaſineſs to themſelves, thoſe who follow the ſpirit, and obey its dictates, are bleſſed with inward comfort, joy and ſatisfaction, joy and tranquillity of mind. And it ſeems, the apoſtle in ſome reſpect, oppoſes this happy frame to the hatred and envy mentioned among the works of the fleſh, which are indeed the worſt kind of ſadneſs and uneaſineſs.

III. The third fruit of the ſpirit is *peace*, *i. e.* concord and unanimity, or a quiet and

peaceable disposition and deportment; a temper of mind that is for maintaining concord and friendship, that is averse to quarrel and discord, and falling out with one another, is for composing differences and living quietly with all men. The spirit of the gospel is a peaceful spirit; peace is frequently recommended in the gospel, and the followers of it are required, as much as in them lies, to *live peaceably with all men:* The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace, and those who are renewed in the spirit of their mind, are of a quiet, calm, composed and pacifick temper, and *follow after the things that make for peace.* The wisdom that is from above is peaceable, tending to peace and concord, and teaching to *live a quiet and peaceable life.* Contrary to this peace and concord which the gospel recommends, and the spirit of Christ teaches, is a turbulent, passionate, quarrelsome and contentious disposition, discord, strife and variance, and the like; a temper of mind that is for picking quarrels, for causing differences and disturbances, and putting all things into disorder; these are the works of the flesh; but the fruit of the spirit is concord and peace, a quiet and pacifick temper and carriage; the gospel requires us to be peace-makers, to have peace one with another, and *to follow peace with all men.* SERM. X.

SERM. X.

IV. Another fruit of the ſpirit, is *long-ſuffering*; a patient bearing of injuries, and forbearing thoſe that do them. Thoſe who practice this virtue are not ſoon in a paſſion, are not eaſily tranſported into reſentment upon every occaſion; but they defer their anger, are diſpoſed to put up injuries and wrongs done them, bear long with the miſcarriages of men, and make not haſte to tender evil for evil, to revenge any affront, or to exact juſt puniſhment for a juſt crime. They will be ready to paſs by indignities offered them, and even to forget wrongs done to them, they will not be forward to retaliate, nor rigorouſly to exact ſatisfaction for every damage they may unjuſtly ſuffer; but will bear patiently with thoſe that have offended them, and be ready to forgive them. Chriſtians are exhorted to exerciſe this virtue, and the conſideration of the forbearance and long ſuffering of God towards them, ſhould induce them to do the like by others, *Eph.* iv. 2. *With all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in love.* Col. iii. 12, 13. *Put on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any; even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.*

V. *Gentleneſs* or kindneſs, is another fruit of the ſpirit; a ſweet, kind, courteous and

and affable diſpoſition and demeanour. Chriſtianity does not make men to be of a ſour, ill-natur'd and crabbed temper, but reforms their nature, makes them reſpectful, kind and courteous, and inſpires them with ſweetneſs of diſpoſition; a mild, condeſcending and reſpectful carriage becomes a chriſtian, the goſpel requires it, and it is entirely agreeable to the ſpirit of it: He ought not to be moroſe and ſullen, teſty and peeviſh, haughty and diſreſpectful, but ſhould be of a ſmooth, tractable and kind diſpoſition, and ſhould carry it towards all with a becoming reſpect. SERM. X.

VI. The next fruit of the ſpirit mentioned by the apoſtle, is *goodneſs*. All manner of moral goodneſs is certainly the work of the ſpirit; but here we are to underſtand beneficence or liberality, or doing good to others; this is a virtue whereby we contribute to the relief, help and ſupport of our neighbour, and do him all the good we can; as the fruit of the ſpirit is love, ſo goodneſs or beneficence muſt be the fruit of the ſpirit, for this is no other than the effect of ſincere love to our neighbour; this duty of doing good to others, is very often recommended in the new Teſtament, *e. g.* Gal. vi. 10. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, eſpecially unto them that are of the houſhold of faith.* 1 Tim. vi. 18. *That they do good, that*

SERM. X. *they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.* Heb. xiii. 16. *But to do good, and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* The gospel requires us to do good to all men as we have opportunity, even our enemies, as our Saviour bids us *do good to them that hate us.* We should give to them that are in want, according to our ability, and should contribute what we can to the relief of their necessities, we should help them every way as we are capable, and should do them good in every respect; and this every one that impartially follows the dictates of his mind and of the holy spirit in the scripture, will certainly do, *for the fruit of the spirit is goodness.*

VII. Another fruit of the spirit is *faith, i. e.* fidelity or faithfulness; thus the word is rendered, *Tit.* ii. 10. *Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity.* The gospel teaches us to live justly, and to speak truth with our neighbour. We should be true to our word, should make good our promises, should be faithful in the management of any affair we are entrusted with, and should be just and honest in all our dealings; we should practice no deceit or falshood, should make use of no arts to circumvent and deceive, and should take care that we never prove false to our trust; we should constantly maintain truth, should preserve integrity and uprightness,

neſs, and ſhould ſhew all good fidelity in the management of whatever is put into their hands. SERM. X.

VIII. The next fruit of the ſpirit is *meekneſs*. This is pretty much of the ſame nature with ſome of the ſame virtues that we have treated of before, eſpecially long-ſuffering and gentleneſs; but I ſhall nevertheleſs ſay ſomething of it here. Meekneſs then is a quiet and mild diſpoſition, that is averſe from wrath and anger, and from cruelty and fierceneſs, and from *rendring evil for evil*; it takes injuries and affronts patiently, and is very little moved at them, and is averſe from revenge and retaliation; it chuſes oftentimes to give up its right, rather than to proceed to extremities, and endeavours to *overcome evil with good*. This virtue we are often exhorted to, and our Saviour ſays, *Bleſſed are the meek, for they ſhall inherit the earth*, Matt. v. 5.

IX. The laſt virtue mentioned by the apoſtle, as the fruit of the ſpirit, is *temperance*, continence, or a command over one's ſelf. This virtue conſiſts in bridling and reſtraining our paſſions and appetites, and keeping them within due bounds, ſo as not to gratify them beyond what is lawful; ſo that moderation in eating and drinking, and in the uſe of all worldly enjoyments, is here required, and every exceſs whatſoever to be avoided, every unlawful gratification, and every

SERM. X. every kind of exceſs, is contrary to this virtue of temperance, all chaſtity and moderation are included in it, and it conſiſts in the due government of one's ſelf in every reſpect. We are often exhorted to abſtain from every impurity, and to avoid every exceſs; our Saviour charges his diſciples to *take heed leſt their hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life.* And the apoſtle *Peter* exhorts to *add to knowledge temperance*, 2 Epiſt. i. 6. This is a moſt neceſſary and comprehenſive virtue, and what all they who are renewed in the ſpirit of their mind, endeavour to maintain. Thus have we briefly conſidered theſe nine fruits of the ſpirit, *viz.* love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith, meekneſs, temperance. The apoſtle concludes, *Againſt ſuch there is no law*, κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων, againſt ſuch things, or theſe and the like virtues, there is no law, they being agreeable to all law. The preceeding catalogue of vices, or of the works of the fleſh, have all law againſt them, and are condemned by it: The apoſtle mentions the law of Chriſt in particular, as being againſt them, when he ſays, *of the which I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in time paſt, that they who do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God.* But theſe and the like fruits of the ſpirit, theſe virtues, are altogether agreeable to the law of nature, to the moral law of the *Jews*, and

and to the gospel, or the law of Christ, so that there is no law against them, but each law is entirely for them. We may also understand these words, *against such there is no law*, of persons who maintain these virtues, against such persons, *viz.* as exercise these virtues, or bring forth such fruits of the spirit, *there is no law*; there is no law to condemn such as walk thus after the spirit, such persons are approved of God, are taken into his favour, and stand justified before him, and so are not under condemnation. The apostle says, *The law was not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly, and for sinners, for unholy and profane*, &c. 1 *Tim.* i. 9. The law was not made to condemn the just man, but to restrain and condemn the wicked. Thus have we considered these words of the apostle, and now to conclude.

SERM. X.

1. Hereby we see that the gospel by leading us to holiness, and bringing us to the exercise of virtue, tends to our real comfort here, and happiness hereafter. It is the design of the gospel to reduce men to the practice of holiness, righteousness and goodness, to this end, are all the precepts and exhortations, promises and threatnings of the gospel, and for this purpose, the holy spirit is promised to renew us in the spirit of our mind. Now certainly, the greatest pleasure, comfort and satisfaction arises from the exercise

SERM. X. ercise of these virtues, and therefore the apostle tells us, that joy is one of the fruits of the spirit; and as this joy is derived to the mind from the exercise of those virtues whilst here, so they are followed with the reward of eternal felicity and glory in the world to come. There is no law against them who practice these virtues, and so they shall not come into condemnation; and as they have the divine approbation, they shall be eternally happy *in his presence, where there is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.* Thus the gospel by leading us to holiness, leads us to true comfort here, and happiness hereafter.

2. Let us all endeavour to bring forth the fruit of the spirit. Let us *walk after the spirit, and not after the flesh. The fruit of the spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth*; let us therefore follow after these things, and so *walk as children of light*; let us abandon all the works of the flesh, as knowing, that they *who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God*, and let us abound in all the fruits of the spirit, that we may escape condemnation, for *against such there is no law:* Let us exercise these virtues in particular that we have been treating of; let us love all men, love our enemies, and love one another. Let us *follow peace with all men*, let us exercise long-suffering and forbearance, and be of a kind, courteous

teous and affable diſpoſition, for *charity ſuf-* SERM.
fereth long and is kind. Let us do good to X.
all as we have opportunity, and let us live
righteouſly, let us obſerve truth, and be faithful in all we do. Let us be poſſeſſed of true chriſtian meekneſs, and let us be temperate in all things. And that we may bring forth theſe fruits, let us be renewed in the ſpirit of our mind, let us attend to the goſpel, and pray for the aſſiſtance of the holy ſpirit; that in the exerciſe of theſe virtues, we may have comfort, joy and ſatisfaction in our own minds here, and may attain to eternal felicity hereafter; for there is no condemnation to them who thus walk after the ſpirit, and though *to be carnally minded is death, to be ſpiritually minded is life and peace.*

SERMON XI.

God our Saviour and Deliverer.

PSAL. l. 15.

And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me.

SERM. XI.

AS God is a being of moſt perfect goodneſs, ſo he takes pleaſure in communicating his goodneſs to his creatures, the works of his hands: And ſo great is his goodneſs towards the children of men, that notwithſtanding their manifold ſins and trangreſſions againſt him, he is pleaſed to beſtow innumerable bleſſings upon them: So that all the advantages and comforts we enjoy, muſt be the effect of his rich grace and exceeding great mercy; ſince it muſt be acknowledged, that by our ſins, we have rendered ourſelves juſtly obnoxious to his diſpleaſure, and have deſerved judgments at his hands rather than bleſſings, and evil rather than good. We are indeed liable to many evils in this ſtate, as well as to enjoy a great deal of good; but then with

with regard to the evils we may ſuffer, it is declared, that God *does not afflict, nor grieve the children of men:* Our ſins therefore muſt be the occaſion of them; and farther, they are deſigned by our good and gracious God and merciful Father, for our real good and happineſs in the end. *No affliction*, indeed, *for the preſent ſeemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheleſs it yieldeth afterwards the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs to them that are exerciſed thereby*; ſo that all the afflictions that God ſends, or permits to come upon us here, are as ſo many corrections and chaſtiſements from the hands of our heavenly Father, deſigned for our amendment, and for our real advantage, to ſet us at a greater diſtance from ſin, and to give us the greater averſion to it, and to cauſe us to have a greater regard to and be more in love with our duty for the future. And when afflictions and troubles have had this bleſſed effect, and this valuable end is anſwered by them, when we are really made better, and are brought to a due ſenſe of our duty thereby; then God is uſually pleaſed ſome way or other, as he ſees to be moſt fit, to deliver his ſervants out of them; which deliverance ſhould likewiſe ſo affect them as to engage them to expreſs their gratitude to their great deliverer and benefactor, by a more exact conformity to his will, and endeavour to glorify him in their whole converſation; according

SERM. XI.

SERM. XI. according to what is said in our text: *And call upon me in the day of trouble; and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

These words are to be understood as spoken by God to the people of *Israel*. And indeed this whole Psalm was designed for the instruction of that people, to teach them what they should do, and what they should not do, wherein the true service of God consisted, and what was in itself indifferent, and was no real part of it, though imposed for some particular end and purpose. The *Jews*, as well before, as in our Saviour's time, were so weak or so corrupt, as to lay more stress upon the ceremonial precepts of the law respecting sacrifices, and the like, than upon the moral part of it, which commanded those things which in themselves were only acceptable to God. They thought to please God by the multitude of their sacrifices, by being nicely scrupulous and exact in the observation of rites and ceremonies, and even by exceeding in them; but did not duly consider, that it was only judgment, mercy and faith, or the love of God, that was truly acceptable to him, and so they too commonly neglected those weightier matters of the law, and the more they neglected those, the more they thought to please and atone the Almighty by those carnal ordinances which were only imposed on them till the time of reformation. Their erring

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so grosly in this matter, was one main reason, that so many prophets were raised up among them; whose business we may perceive it was, in many of their sermons or orations to the people, to testify of what mean accouut their sacrifices and ceremonies were in the sight of God, when they gave way to cruelty, injustice and oppression, and other immoralities; that their nicety and exactness, and abounding in those matters, would profit them nothing at all, if they were not really good and virtuous, and did not yield a sincere obedience to those precepts of morality which God had given them, and which enjoined those things which were really and intrinsically, and in their own nature good and well-pleasing in his sight; and that therefore being less solicitous about their new-moons and sabbaths, their sacrifices and carnal oblations, they should apply themselves chiefly to the practice of real virtue and righteousness, real religion and piety; and should make it their main business to follow that which was truly good, *to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with God*, behaving themselves suitably towards him, and serving him in such a way as is most agreeable to his moral perfections. To instruct them in these matters, was likewise the design of this psalm, as I have observed. In it God himself is represented as their instructor; and

SERM. XI.

SERM. XI. who would not hear when God teaches? When the divine Being vouchsafes to instruct us for our good, how ready should we be to learn and obey? His appearance on this account, and summoning the people together to hear him, is most magnificently described in the six first verses, *The mighty God, even the Lord hath spoken, and called the earth* (or the land) *from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof, (i. e.* from the east and from the west.) *Out of Zion the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people, q. d.* What God has to declare to his people, is so solemn and important a thing, that heaven and earth shall be called upon to bear record, or witness to it; as is usual in solemn cases, to stir up attention in those whom the discourse does concern: Thus *Deut.* xxxii. 1. *Moses* says, *Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear O earth, the words of my mouth.* And *Isaiah*, chap. i. 2. *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.* The Psalmist then goes on thus: *Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice, i. e.* the House of *Israel:* And

And how they made a covenant with God by ſacrifice, we may all ſee, *Exod.* xxiv. 4—8. *And Moſes wrote all the words of the Lord, and roſe up early in the morning, and built an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Iſrael. And he ſent young men of the children of Iſrael, which offered burnt-offerings, and ſacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moſes took half of the blood, and put it in baſons; and half the blood he ſprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they ſaid, All that the Lord hath ſaid, will we do, and be obedient. And Moſes took the blood and ſprinkled it on the people, and ſaid, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all theſe words.* Thus the houſe of *Iſrael* made a covenant with God by ſacrifice, whence it is, that they are here ſummoned under this character: *Gather my ſaints together unto me, thoſe that have made a covenant with me by ſacrifice. And the heavens ſhall declare his righteouſneſs; for God is judge himſelf,* Selah. God being there repreſented as appearing, and the people gathered together to hear him, he ſolemnly declares to them what were the things that were well-pleaſing unto him, and wherein his true ſervice conſiſts; not in ſacrifices, external oblations, or any kind of ceremonies, but in prayer, thankſ-

SERM. XI.

SERM. XI. thankſgiving and obedience, or in a ſincere and right diſpoſition and behaviour towards him: And firſt, he in a very beautiful and elegant manner, ſets before them the vanity of their multitude of ſacrifices, when they placed their religion in them, or thought by that means alone to pleaſe God, *ver.* 7—13. *Hear, O Iſrael, and I will teſtify againſt thee: I am God even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy ſacrifices, or thy burnt-offerings, to have been continually before me*; (or as it may be read) they have been continually before me. *I will take no bullock out of thy houſe, nor he-goats out of thy folds. For every beaſt of the foreſt is mine, and the cattle upon a thouſand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beaſts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulneſs thereof. Will I eat the fleſh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?* After he had thus expoſed their pompous ceremonial worſhip, he commands them to apply themſelves to the practice of thoſe things, which were truly in themſelves acceptable to him, *ver.* 14, 15. *Offer unto God thankſgiving, i. e.* Acknowledge with a ſuitable temper of mind all his mercies and favours towards thee, *and pay thy vows unto the moſt high*; (perform that obedience which thou haſt vowed and promiſed unto him.) *Iſrael* vowed obedience to God, as in that fore-

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cited paſſage in *Exod.* xxiv. when they ſaid, *All that the Lord hath ſaid, will we do, and be obedient.* Chriſtians vow obedience to God in their baptiſm: And it is uſual for perſons under affliction, to reſolve and promiſe, that they will, for the future, live in obedience to God's commands. Now this obedience, which we lie under a natural obligation to perform, antecedent to any expreſs promiſes or engagements of our own, yet becomes more incumbent upon us, from ſuch promiſes and engagements, whenever, or however made; and therefore ſuch reſolutions, vows and proteſtations of obedience to God, we are above all things concerned to make good and perform *Offer unto God thankſgiving, and pay thy vows unto the moſt high*; which words are followed by thoſe of our text. *And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me.* SERM. XI.

Theſe words then are ſpoken to the nation or people of *Iſrael*; but, nevertheleſs, they contain matter of very uſeful inſtruction for all people, perſons and times; and therefore I have choſen to treat of them at this time. By their connexion with the foregoing *verſe*, we may ſee what are the qualifications that are neceſſary in perſons who would call upon God, or pray unto him after an acceptable manner, ſo as to have their prayers heard, and their requeſts granted. It is very cer-

SERM. XI.

tain that God does not regard the prayers of ſome perſons, but has a gracious reſpect to the prayers of others. They whoſe prayers God will not hear, are the wicked and ungodly, who love ſin, and live in the practice of it. *If I regard iniquity in my heart*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *the Lord will not hear me.* And tho' ſuch perſons be ever ſo exact in the obſervance of rites and ceremonies, yet that will avail nothing towards rendering their prayers acceptable to God; for even *the ſacrifices of the wicked are abomination to the Lord*; and tho' here perſons under ſuch qualifications, as we ſhall mention preſently, are exhorted to call upon God, and are aſſured that he will hear them; yet, where thoſe qualifications are wanting, how punctual ſoever men may be in outward ceremonious worſhip, it is declared that their prayers will ſignify nothing; for to ſuch perſons God ſays, *Iſa.* i. 15. *When ye ſpread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear.* See likewiſe the *ver.* following our text, *But unto the wicked God ſaith, What haſt thou to do to declare my ſtatutes, or that thou ſhouldeſt take my covenant in thy mouth?* That thou ſhouldeſt plead or make mention of the covenant between me and thee, which thou haſt broken, and continueſt ſtill to break. But then they whoſe prayers God will hear, are the penitent, the humble, the obedient, and

and the righteous. God often indeed is so gracious as to hear the prayers of those who have continued a great while in a course of sin; but then it is upon their repentance and resolutions of amendment, when they humble themselves before God, and from a sense of their sins are truly humble for them, and disposed to forsake them. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise*, says the Psalmist, *Psal.* li. 17. *The prayer of the upright is his delight; his eyes are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers*; whilst *the sacrifice of the wicked*, of those who continue in a course of sin, *is an abomination to the Lord*, and his face is against them that do evil, or that continue to do so without repentance. So that he hears only the prayers of the righteous, or of those who are sincerely disposed and resolved to be so; whilst he rejects the prayers of the wicked, and of hypocrites, who, whilst they pretend obedience to God in rites and ceremonies, do not scruple to disobey him in those things which above all things else he requires of them. And therefore, after he had exposed their numerous sacrifices and ceremonies, he says, *Offer unto God thanksgiving*, or a confession (as it is in the original) which may signify either a confession of praise to God in a grateful acknowledgment of his mercies, as it often does, or a penitent

SERM. XI.

SERM. XI. confeſſion of ſin: *Offer unto God a confeſſion, and pay thy vows unto the Moſt High; and call upon me* (or then call upon me) *in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me*, q. d. Do not think that I will regard the multitude of thy ſacrifices, ſo as to be induced thereby to hear thy prayers in diſtreſs, and deliver thee from trouble, whilſt thou continueſt to tranſgreſs my laws, and diſobey my will; but, inſtead of offering ſo many ſacrifices and burnt-offerings to me, offer the ſacrifice of a thankful, devout and penitent mind, and perform that obedience to my commands, which thou haſt vowed and promiſed; and then call upon me in the time of thy diſtreſs, and I will graciouſly regard and hear thy prayers, and will deliver thee; but take care, when thou art delivered, that thou teſtify the ſincerity of thy repentance and turning to me, by glorifying me thy deliverer, as thou oughteſt to do.

Here then, 1*ſt*, The people of *Iſrael* are exhorted and commmanded to call upon God in the day of trouble, *i. e.* with a ſuitable temper of mind to pray to him in times of difficulty, danger, diſtreſs and anxiety, for protection, preſervation and deliverance; for this is the frequent meaning of calling upon God in ſcripture, which is ſo manifeſt, that I need not turn you to particular places for the proof of it. 2*dly*. God promiſes, upon their

their thus calling upon him, or praying to him, to rescue, deliver and save them; *I will deliver thee.* *3dly.* It is declared what use they should make of the divine deliverance and salvation; they should glorify God thereupon, should render all praise, honour and obedience to him. *I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.* SERM. XI.

Now, in farther treating on these words, I shall endeavour to shew,

I. That God is the Saviour, the great preserver and deliverer of men.
II. That therefore in times of danger, distress, affliction and calamity, we should implore his salvation and deliverance.
III. That when God is graciously pleased to save and deliver us, it should be our greatest concern, as it is our indispensable duty, to glorify him in all our actions.

I. I am to shew that God is the Saviour, the great preserver and deliverer of men. Now this will appear from reason, from experience and observation, and from the holy scriptures.

1st, That God is the great Saviour and deliverer of men, may appear from reason, and the consideration of the divine providence, the reality of which may be very easily proved. As God made and created all things, and

SERM. XI. and 'tis by his influence that they are conſtantly ſupported, upheld and maintained, ſo it is moſt reaſonable to think, that he rules and governs, that he orders and diſpoſes all things in ſuch manner as in his wiſdom he knows to be moſt meet and fit. The providence of God is as certain, as that all things were created by him: And as from this viſible frame of things, and from our own exiſtence, we may moſt rationally conclude that there is a God, who by his power made all things, and ſtill upholds and ſuſtains them by his influence; ſo we may as rationally conclude, that this great author and maintainer of the univerſe is concerned to manage and conduct all the parts of it, and to order them all for the beſt. God is an omnipreſent being; he is every where, he fills all places, all perſons and things; in him we live, and move, and have our being; he is almighty, has all power, and can do whatſoever he pleaſeth; and he is omniſcient, he has a perfect knowledge of all perſons and things, and is thoroughly acquainted with their ſeveral natures, conditions and circumſtances; and ſo nothing is wanting in him, as to his preſence, his power, or his ſkill, for managing and diſpoſing the concerns of all his creatures; he is abſent from none of them, for he is every where preſent; nothing is too great for his power, for he can do every thing; nothing is hid from his knowledge, for he knows all things; ſo that

if any thing be wanting in him, it must be a will to take care of his creatures; but this we are sure cannot be wanting in him, since he is a being perfectly good, as may be demonstrated from his very nature, or those natural perfections which we are sure he possesses in a manner far above our conceptions. And it is inconsistent with reason to imagine, that a being possessed of such perfections, and who at the same time must be all-wise, and perfectly good, and righteous; I say, it is inconsistent with reason, and the highest absurdity, to suppose that such a being should not extend his care to all the works of his hands, so as to govern them, and to order and dispose them in the fittest manner, according to their natures, and his own most wonderful perfectness. It is true, he usually works by second causes; but even these are not only originally ordained, but are constantly upheld and directed by him, and he has often interposed in an extraordinary manner, contrary to the usual course of them. Now as the divine being extends his care to all his works, so he does to this earth, or our world in particular, and to every thing in it; and as his care is exercised over the insensitive, and the brute creation, so man, the most excellent part of his workmanship in this lower world, is especially interested therein. He *preserveth men and beast*, but man in an especial manner, whose moral actions

SERM. XI.

God

SERM. XI.

God has a principal regard to; and if he does not reward or punish them here, he will do it hereafter. Divine providence is chiefly, and in an eminent manner, concerned for nations, communities and bodies of men, in which mankind subsists; but yet it is really concerned likewise even for every individual person. As the whole is preferable to a part, so God takes the chiefest care of the whole; but yet not the least part is excluded from his care. As not a sparrow falls on the ground without him, so we may be certain that not a man does, who is of more value than many sparrows. And let not any one think, that the disorders that appear in human affairs are any just objection to the reality of a providence; for most of these disorders arise from the vices and follies of men, or are the natural and penal effects of them; otherwise they are mostly but seeming, and not real disorders. The providence of God has frequently been seen in bringing evils and calamities, or permitting them to come upon a people for their wickedness; which, unless they have made themselves really ripe for destruction, are designed for their reformation; and they are always designed for the good of those about them, that, being warned, they may avoid their crimes, and so escape the punishment. And as the care our Maker has for us appears in various instances in doing us good in many respects,

respects, continually providing for us, and the like; so it is particularly exercised in preserving us in the midst of the many dangers we are liable to, and delivering us from those miseries, afflictions and calamities that actually invade us. Deliverances and preservations are certainly some of the main instances of that divine providence which is continually engaged for our good; the care the divine Being exercises over us, being the effect of his love, and kindness, and good-will towards us, must frequently discover itself this way, and indeed, as often as in his wisdom he sees it to be fit. Now, as the kind providence of God extends itself to all men, so it is particularly and more eminently engaged for those who fear, and love, and serve him, and with a suitable temper of mind call upon him in their trouble and distress: He is peculiarly nigh unto them that call upon him, to all them that call upon him in truth; and his eyes are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; if he does not deliver them out of trouble, he will be with them in trouble, to sustain, and strengthen, and comfort them, to revive their hearts, and to uphold them with the right-hand of his righteousness; and whenever it is for their real good to be delivered, he will deliver them; which is all we need understand by the promise in our text, when applied to particular persons, *Call upon me in the day of trouble,* SERM. XI.

SERM. XI. *trouble, I will deliver thee.* Tho' when understood as belonging to the people of *Israel*, (as it was really a promise made to them, as we have seen) then it may be understood strictly and absolutely, according to the many temporal promises made to that people, that if they did really humble themselves, and return to the Lord with their whole hearts, then God would return unto them, and would deliver them from those temporal evils and calamities which he had brought upon them for their sins. But this by the by; from what has been said, we may see, that as the providence of God extends over all, so he must be the great Saviour, preserver and deliverer of men.

2*dly*, This may also appear from experience and observation. Every preservation and deliverance that we experience ourselves, or observe others to have been blessed with, every salvation, or remarkable providence of that nature that we are witnesses of, or that we hear or read of, is a sensible and plain demonstration, that God is the great preserver and deliverer of men. For preservations and deliverances from evil and calamity, however brought about by second causes, are originally owing to God; he is the first and supreme cause of them. If we or any are delivered and preserved, it is God that is our great deliverer and preserver. As it is to him that we originally owe all the good things

things we partake of, or enjoy, ſo we ought to acknowledge, that all our deliverances and ſalvations, of what kind ſoever they be, do come originally from him, and have him for their ſupreme author and firſt cauſe. And truly the deliverances that we and others are bleſſed with are very many and great. There be various inſtances of God's preſerving and delivering men, and eſpecially nations of men, from impending and actual calamities, and ſome within our own time and memory. The nation of the *Jews* was frequently delivered after a very remarkable manner, and was bleſſed with many wonderful ſalvations; tho', indeed, as has been already hinted, there was ſome difference between them and other nations, upon the account of God's being their king in a peculiar manner, their civil or political head; ſo that as they were ſometimes more remarkably puniſhed, ſo they were at other times more remarkably ſaved and delivered than other nations. But notwithſtanding this, God was then, as well as now, the God of the *Gentiles* as well as of the *Jews*, and his providence was often ſeen in preſerving and delivering them alſo. And then, as to particular perſons, we have many inſtances of ſignal deliverances that God was pleaſed to favour them with; as in the caſe of *Noah*, *Lot*, *Shadrach*, *Meſheck*, and *Abednego*, *Daniel*, *Paul*, and other ſaints and ſervants of God.

SERM. XI.

SERM. XI.

God. And tho' ſuch miraculous deliverances are not ſo common now, yet we may, perhaps, have obſerved many in our time, and ſome, even of our acquaintance and friends, have experienced very merciful preſervations and deliverances. And then, as to ourſelves, I believe there is ſcarce one of us, but has known, in ſome degree or other, what trouble and affliction is, either of a ſpiritual or temporal nature, and has been, in ſome degree or other, delivered from it. Some of us, it may be, have been caſt down and dejected, and troubled from a ſenſe of our ſins, and the apprehenſions of the divine diſpleaſure, and God has delivered us from our fears by the gracious promiſes of his word, and has ſpoken peace to our ſouls, when we have been under the greateſt anxiety and trouble. Some of us, it may be, have had the ſentence of death in ourſelves, and have been raiſed up again; others have met with diſappointments, difficulties and perplexities in their worldly affairs, and have at laſt had them ſettled to their ſatisfaction; and again, others, perhaps, have been under fears and apprehenſions on the account of near and dear relations and friends, and have been delivered from thoſe fears and apprehenſions. Now theſe and other inſtances of deliverances and ſalvations, which we have experienced ourſelves, or have obſerved in others, do plainly

plainly ſhew, that God is the great preſer- SERM.
ver and deliverer of men. But, XI.

3*dly*, This is farther manifeſt from the abundant declarations of holy ſcripture. As reaſon, and experience, and obſervation prove that God is the deliverer and preſerver of men, ſo this is the voice of the holy ſcriptures, which every where celebrate and proclaim his goodneſs on this account. Thus he is very frequently called a Saviour both in the old and new Teſtament; as 1 *Tim.* iv. 10. *For therefore we both labour, and ſuffer reproach, becauſe we truſt in the living God, who is the* Saviour of all men, *eſpecially of thoſe that believe.* Thus he is ſtiled the preſerver of men, *Job* vii. 20. *I have ſinned, what ſhall I do unto thee,* O thou preſerver of men? And ſo he is ſaid to preſerve man and beaſt, *Pſal.* xxxvi. 6. *Thy righteouſneſs is like the great mountains, thy judgments are a great deep; O Lord, thou preſerveſt man and beaſt.* It follows in the next *verſe, How excellent is thy loving-kindneſs, O God? therefore the children of men put their truſt under the ſhadow of thy wings.* Thus *David* often calls God his deliverer, *Pſal.* xl. ult. *But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me; thou art my help and my* deliverer, *make no tarrying, O my God.* And he often celebrates the goodneſs of God in delivering men, *Pſal.* cvii. 17,—20. *Fools, becauſe of their tranſgreſſion, and becauſe of their iniquities, are afflicted: Their*

SERM. XI. *ſoul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble; he ſaveth them out of their diſtreſſes: He ſent his word and healed them; and* delivered *them from their deſtructions.* And God is in an eſpecial manner the deliverer of the righteous: Thus it is ſaid, *Pſal.* xxxiv. 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all,* i. e. either here or in another ſtate. Thus then we ſee, both from reaſon, and the reality of the divine providence, from experience and obſervation, and from the numerous, repeated, and expreſs declarations of the holy ſcriptures, that God is the great ſaviour, preſerver and deliverer of men; and that *ſalvation is of the Lord.*

II. I come now to ſhew, That as God is our preſerver and deliverer, we ought, in times of danger, diſtreſs, affliction and calamity, to implore the divine deliverance and ſalvation. That this is a duty, I think, can hardly be denied by any who believe the providence of God: For tho' it is true, that whether we prayed or no, an all-wiſe and all-good being would do every thing for the beſt; yet it is as true, that ſome qualifications are neceſſary in us, in order to a right and ſuitable reception of his favours, and unleſs we are in ſome meaſure prepared for them, we have no good reaſon to expect them:

them: And how our minds can be prepared to receive them, unleſs we are diſpoſed humbly to aſk them at God's hands, I know not. As we depend on God for every good thing, and we live on his bounty and kindneſs, ſo we ought to look up to him for the enjoyment of all bleſſings, and to aſk of him whatever we ſtand in need of; and as it is by him that we are ſaved and delivered from evil and danger, and without him we cannot be ſo delivered and ſaved, it muſt certainly be our duty, as well as intereſt, in all times of difficulty and diſtreſs, whether of a publick or private nature, moſt humbly and earneſtly to pray, that he would be graciouſly pleaſed to deliver us out of it. God delights to beſtow his bleſſings in this way, *viz.* the way of prayer, becauſe it ſuppoſes us to be qualified, and rightly diſpoſed and prepared to receive them, and to be fit objects of his favour, which they who have no regard to God as the great author of all our comfort and happineſs cannot be. And therefore if this duty of prayer be rightly performed and practiſed, it is moſt likely to be crown'd with ſucceſs. Thus in our text, God commands the *Iſraelites* to call upon him in the day of trouble, and thereupon promiſes to deliver them; but that is, if they call upon him in ſincerity and truth, and with a ſuitable temper and diſpoſition of mind. Now, if we would perform this duty acceptably, and par-

SERM. XI.

SERM. XI. ticularly would have our prayers in the time of national affliction, whether from war, famine, or peſtilence, graciouſly heard and anſwered, they muſt proceed from a pure heart; for if we *regard iniquity in our hearts, God will not hear us*, as we obſerved before; they muſt be joined with a ſenſe of our paſt follies and tranſgreſſions, whereby we have not only deſerved the calamity we for the preſent labour under, but much greater, and with a ſenſe of God's righteouſneſs in afflicting us: They muſt be attended with reſolutions of amendment, or a ſincere deſire to forſake the evil ways we have walk'd in, and hearty purpoſes and endeavours to walk ſo for the future as to pleaſe God; they muſt be joined with a humble hope and truſt in God, whoſe *tender mercies are over all his works*; and with reſignation to his will, and a patient waiting for him: For after all we muſt acquieſce in the will of God, and ſhould be ready to ſay with our Saviour, *Not my will, but thine be done.* And we have the example of *David* for a patient waiting for God, *Pſal.* xl. 1. *I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.* In ſhort, we may learn from a heathen king, the king of *Nineveh*, with what temper of mind we ſhould pray to God in times of danger, difficulty and diſtreſs; for after he had commanded all to cry mightily unto God, he adds, *Yea, let them turn every one from*

from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands; who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not? Jonah iii. 8, 9. If with this temper and diſpoſition of mind, with theſe holy purpoſes, reſolutions and endeavours, which we have mentioned, we pray to God under affliction, we then glorify him in affliction; and ſo it is likely that God will deliver us, that we may ſtill farther glorify him. If it be objected, that things being under the influences of ſecond cauſes, will have their natural courſe, whether we pray or not; I anſwer, that many of theſe cauſes are very much hidden from us, and for ought we know, God, or inviſible beings commiſſioned by him, may frequently act above them, or contrary to them, or, however, may in an extraordinary manner direct and diſpoſe them. Therefore, as we ought to pray to God in every condition for every thing we want, ſo more eſpecially ſhould we in times of affliction and diſtreſs for deliverance from it. There are many examples of this in the holy ſcriptures, *viz.* of pious men and ſincere penitents, who prayed earneſtly for the divine preſervation and deliverance, as *David*, *Paul*, &c. And we are often called upon to the exerciſe of this duty; *Be careful for nothing*, ſays the apoſtle, *but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication, with thankſgiving, let your requeſt*

SERM. XI.

SERM. XI. *be made known unto God*, Phil. iv. 6. And in the Lord's Prayer we are taught to pray, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.* In ſhort, as this is a natural duty, ſo it is very frequently recommended and inculcated in the word of God. *Finally*, As the divine bleſſing is promiſed to thoſe who call upon God in ſincerity and truth, ſo it is frequently declared, that God delivers ſuch as ſo pray unto him; and there are many inſtances of ſucceſs in the ſincere exerciſe of this duty. Thus, *Pſal.* xxxiv. 4. *I ſought the Lord*, ſays *David*, *and he heard me, and delivered me out of all my fears.* Ver. 6. *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and ſaved him out of all his troubles.* Ver. 17. *The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.* And it is frequently repeated in the cviith *Pſal. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble; and he delivered them out of their diſtreſſes.* Thus we ſee that it is both our duty and intereſt to implore the divine deliverance and ſalvation in times of affliction, calamity and diſtreſs; and that if we do this with a ſuitable temper of mind, it is the moſt likely way to obtain deliverance from them.

III. When God is graciouſly pleaſed to ſave and deliver us, it ſhould be our greateſt concern, as it is our indiſpenſible duty, to glorify him on this account. This even grati-

gratitude obliges us to. It is in many re- SERM.
ſpects incumbent upon us to glorify God; XI.
we are obliged to it by our relation to him, and dependance on him, as his creatures. As we receive our very being from him, and all the good we enjoy is owing to him, as the original author of it; ſo it ſhould be our chief buſineſs and our principal care to glorify him, and to render to him, to the beſt of our power, according to the benefits he has beſtowed upon us; though ſtill, all that we can do, will come vaſtly ſhort of what is due to him. To glorify God is one main end of our being; we were made to glorify him, and he has laid us under innumerable obligations ſo to do; and among the reſt, the deliverances he is pleaſed from time to time to favour us with, do loudly call upon us to glorify him. *Salvation*, we have heard, *is of the Lord*; if at any time we are ſaved and delivered, (as in ſome ſenſe we conſtantly are) it is God who ſaves us and delivers us; and certainly we ſhall be guilty of the worſt ingratitude, if we are not hereby induced to honour and glorify *him*, our great preſerver and deliverer. If we forget his benefits herein, we ſhall have juſt reaſon to fear, that he who once graciouſly preſerved and delivered us, will do ſo no more, but will leave us to be overwhelmed with the terrible apprehenſions of his wrath, and ſo periſh under the burden of

SERM. XI.

our afflictions and calamities. The great end and design of God in preserving and delivering us is, that we might live to his glory, and might shew forth his praises; *I will deliver thee*, says he to *Israel*, *and thou shalt glorify me*; or, that thou mightest glorify me: Not that any advantage accrues to the divine Being hereby, far be it from us to think that; but all this is required for our own good. Now we glorify God, 1*st*, When we praise him, and give thanks unto him for his mercies. 2*dly*, and chiefly, when his goodness induces us to become his sincere servants, and to live in obedience to him. Both these are expressed together in the last verse of this Psalm. *Whoso offereth me praise, glorifieth me*; *and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God.*

1*st*, We glorify God for the deliverances and salvations he is pleased to favour us with, when we praise him and give thanks unto him for them. Hereby, we in a solemn manner, acknowledge him to be our deliverer, and expressly ascribe to him the glory that is due unto his name on that account. As we ought to pray for deliverance from distress, and preservation from dangers, so we ought to return the most humble and hearty thanks to God, when we are so delivered and preserved, and should bless and praise his name for it. As in every thing we should give thanks, so we should especially

cially in this, and not forget the divine benefits to us in this reſpect, ſo as to neglect to render praiſe on this occaſion to him to whom all praiſe is due. We are exhorted, in the verſe preceding our text, to *offer unto God thankſgiving, and pay thy vows unto the moſt high*; and *David* is frequently reſolving to bleſs and magnify the name of God for the ſalvations he had been favoured with. *Pſ.* xxxiv. beginning, *I will bleſs the Lord at all times, his praiſe ſhall continually be in my mouth*; and, ver. 3. *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together:* It follows in the next verſe, *I ſought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.* This it what he was ſo earneſt in bleſſing the Lord for, and calling upon others to join him therein. Thus alſo *Pſ.* cxvi. 12, 13, 14. having experienced a wonderful deliverance, he breaks out, *What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of ſalvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now in the preſence of all his people.* And, *ver.* 17. he ſays, *I will offer to thee, the ſacrifice of thankſgiving, and call upon the name of the Lord.* See alſo *Pſ.* ciii. beginning, *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me, bleſs his holy name*; *Bleſs the Lord O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thy diſeaſes:* SERM. XI.

who

SERM. XI. *who redeemeth thy life from deſtruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindneſs and tender mercies*, &c. As we ought to bleſs God for all the advantages and comforts of life, which he is the original author of; ſo it is highly reaſonable we ſhould praiſe and magnify him, when we eſcape any danger, are delivered from any calamity, or releaſed and freed from any affliction. As there cannot be a right temper of mind towards God, where prayer is wanting, ſo none can be rightly diſpoſed and affected towards him where praiſe and thankſgiving for mercies are wanting. Thus then one inſtance of glorifying God, is by offering praiſe and thankſgiving unto him.

2*dly*, We chiefly, and above all, glorify God for his ſalvation and deliverance, when we are thereby induced to become and continue his ſincere ſervants, and live in obedience to him: When we order our converſation aright before him, and are ſo mindful of the vows and promiſes we made in the time of our affliction as to perform them: When our reſolutions of amendment do not go off with our trouble, but iſſue in ſincere endeavours to be holy in all manner of converſation. When a ſenſe of the divine goodneſs in delivering us, does ſo continue on our minds, as conſtantly to diſpoſe us to walk ſo as to pleaſe God. This is, after all, the beſt and the

the only effectual way of glorifying God, when we praiſe him not only with our lips but in our lives. And this effect, all the inſtances of the divine goodneſs ſhould have upon us, *viz.* to make us more holy, more obedient to the will of God, more kind, and merciful, and charitable to our fellow-creatures; and finally, more like God in all his moral perfections. Particularly, we ſhould be induced by the love of God in delivering us out of our troubles and afflictions, to comfort others under their afflictions, and to contribute what we can towards delivering them out of them. Thus we ſhall *be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful*; and thus we ſhall anſwer the end of God's delivering us, which is, that we may be to his glory, by being farther uſeful and exemplary in the world, and may be induced by his goodneſs and mercy extended to us, to love him more, and ſerve him better than ever we did before; and finally, to be *filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt, unto the praiſe and glory of God.* Thus we ſee that when God is graciouſly pleaſed to ſave and deliver us, it ſhould be our greateſt concern, as it is our indiſpenſable duty, to glorify him on that account, by offering praiſe and thankſgiving unto him, and more eſpecially by ordering our converſation aright before him. SERM. XI.

SERM. XI.

I ſhall now proceed to make ſome application, and ſo conclude.

1. If God be ſuch a being as we have mentioned, ſuch a Saviour and deliverer, then how happy are they who have an eſpecial intereſt in him, and have him for their God? Who can ſay, this God is my God, this Saviour is my Saviour, this deliverer is my deliverer! O happy is the man who is in ſuch a caſe, whoſe God is the Lord, the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlaſting ſtrength. And who is this happy man, but the ſincerely righteous man, who endeavours all he can to obey the commands of God, and to be like unto him. The righteous have a peculiar intereſt in God, and he takes a ſpecial care of them. *The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; he loveth the righteous, and his countenance does behold the upright.* He is eſpecially concerned either to protect and preſerve them, or to uphold and ſuſtain them, or to ſave and deliver them, or finally, to make all things work together for their good; to guide them through all the various changes and occurrences of life, and to bring them at laſt unto glory. His providence, indeed, is univerſal, and extends over all his works; and even the wicked partake of many of the kind inſtances of it: He does good unto all, even unto the unthankful and the evil; *he cauſeth*

cauſeth his ſun to ſhine on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt. But all this is in a general way, and notwithſtanding this, *the face of the Lord is againſt them that do evil*, whilſt they continue to do it; and he is angry and diſpleaſed with the wicked every day. But the good and righteous are intereſted in his favour, and his power, and wiſdom, and faithfulneſs, is engaged for them; his providence is peculiarly concerned for them; and though they may not be diſtinguiſhed from the wicked, in the enjoyment of outward bleſſings here, yet they may be ſure, that God does what he knows to be fitteſt and beſt for them, and if they continue his ſincere ſervants, will *guide them by his counſel, and afterwards receive them to glory.* This the righteous may depend upon, this they may humbly expect, and even lay claim to, by virtue of thoſe gracious promiſes that God has made to them. Now, to have ſo good and gracious a being, ſo wiſe a protector and preſerver, and ſo powerful a Saviour and deliverer, engaged for them, muſt give them the greateſt comfort, joy and ſatisfaction; ſuch perſons may be joyful in the Lord, and be glad in him at all times, and ſo are in a truly happy condition. O therefore, let us become the ſincere ſervants of God, that we may be thus entitled to his ſpecial care, providence

SERM. XI.

and

SERM. XI.

and protection; for happy is every one whose God is the Lord.

2. Let us here take occasion to reflect a little on that great and wonderful deliverance which we enjoy through the gospel of Christ. We have been treating chiefly of temporal deliverances and salvations from trouble and affliction here; and though the goodness of God is very often seen in this, yet this is nothing, when compared with that great, that eternal salvation, which the gospel brings, and which God sent his Son into the world to procure for us. Through Christ in the gospel, we obtain deliverance from sin, from the habits and reigning power of it, and from the guilt and punishment of it; *he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity*, as you lately heard; being justified by his blood, we are saved from wrath through him, are delivered from condemnation, and have all our sins forgiven; if we take care to lead a life agreeable to the gospel, to walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit: And he will at last redeem us from death, and ransom us from the power of the grave, and deliver us from hell and eternal destruction; and this salvation which we obtain, and shall obtain through Christ, will be joined with eternal glory. O therefore, let us give thanks unto the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation,

ſolation, who *has delivered us from the power of darkneſs, and has tranſlated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.*

3. Let us endeavour to glorify God for all the deliverances and ſalvations he is pleaſed to favour us with, and eſpecially for this laſt great one we have mentioned. Let us bleſs and praiſe *him*, who continually preſerves us, and redeems our life from deſtruction, who has delivered our *ſoul from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from falling*. Let us never forget the loving-kindneſs of the Lord, nor the many mercies he has extended to us, but let us call upon our ſouls, and all that is within us, to bleſs and praiſe his name, on the account of them. Let a grateful ſenſe of his exceeding great goodneſs in delivering and preſerving us be continually upon our mind, that we may make mention of his loving-kindneſs upon all occaſions; and more eſpecially that we may be induced to glorify him in our whole life and converſation. Let his goodneſs lead us effectually to repentance, and induce us ſo to walk as to pleaſe him. It may be in the time of our affliction and diſtreſs, we reſolved and promiſed to ſerve the Lord if he would ſpare and deliver us; O therefore, let not theſe vows and promiſes be forgotten, but be ſeriouſly remembered and conſidered by us, ſo as to be put in practice. How can we think of

SERM. XI. of going on to offend our kind preſerver and merciful deliverer; how can we be guilty of ſuch baſe ingratitude, how can we be ſo wicked, yea, how can we be ſuch enemies to ourſelves! For if we go on in ſin, after ſuch wonderful expreſſions of the divine goodneſs to us, we have juſt reaſon to fear, that God may ſend yet greater calamities upon us, than thoſe we have been delivered from, and which is ſaddeſt of all, that we ſhall at laſt periſh in our ſins; for as to the deliverance which the goſpel brings, how ſhall we eſcape! Therefore let us not be ſo fooliſh, wicked, and ungrateful; but let us turn to the Lord with our whole hearts, and endeavour to ſhew forth his praiſes, who hath ſaved and delivered us, not only with our mouths, but in our life and converſation, which ſhould be conſtantly directed to his glory, who has done ſuch great things for us.

Laſtly, If we would make uſe of the divine deliverances and ſalvations, which we have experienced, then we may depend upon the goodneſs of this great deliverer for the future. We have heard how we ſhould behave ourſelves ſo as to glorify God in affliction, or in a day of trouble, and with what temper of mind we ſhould call upon him for deliverance; and alſo, how we ſhould behave ourſelves, ſo as to glorify him when we are delivered. If therefore, upon our ſincere prayer, we have been

been delivered from any trouble or affliction, SERM. or may be hereafter delivered; this may give XI. us very great encouragement to hope ſtill in God; and hereby our truſt and confidence in him, may be ſtrengthened and increaſed: But this cannot be, unleſs we endeavour to make a right uſe of the divine deliverance vouchſafed unto us, and to live to the praiſe and glory of that God, who has ſaved and delivered us. Let us therefore, be eſpecially careful to do this, and then we may hope and truſt in God as long as we live; may expect relief and comfort from him, under all the evils we may be ſtill liable to, and deliverance from them, whenever it may be for our real good; and, finally, may be ſure that we ſhall ſhare in the great deliverance and ſalvation, which Chriſt *is the author of, to all them that obey him: For the Lord will ſpeak peace to his people, and to his ſaints*; but then, if they would ſecure theſe bleſſings, let them not turn again to folly.

SERMON XII.

CHRIST manifeſted, and Obedience to him commanded.

MATT. xvii. 5. lat. part.

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed; hear ye him.

SERM. XII.

IN the foregoing chapter we are told, that our Saviour, coming into the coaſts of *Ceſarea Philippi*, aſked his diſciples, what opinion men generally entertained concerning him, and who they gave out he was? Whereto they anſwered, That *ſome ſaid he was* John the Baptiſt; *ſome* Elias; *and others* Jeremias, *or one of the prophets.* Whereupon he aſked them again, who they thought he was? And when *Simon Peter* anſwered, that he was *the Chriſt, the Son of the living God*, Jeſus pronounced him bleſſed, and gave him a promiſe, that he ſhould be one of the chief miniſters in his kingdom; but withal charged his diſciples, that *they ſhould tell no man, that he was Jeſus the Chriſt:* For all

this was ſaid privately, and if our Saviour, or his intimate friends and conſtant followers had given out in expreſs terms, that he was the Meſſiah, by which word the *Jews* underſtood a temporal and worldly king, who was to rule over them, they would thereby, from their conſtant hatred and diſlike of him, have taken advantage againſt him before his hour was come; this therefore our Lord, with admirable wiſdom and prudence, conſtantly guarded againſt. And here, therefore, that he might direct his diſciples thoughts from what they had been talking about, in relation to his being the Meſſiah, and might beat them off from the falſe expectation of a temporal kingdom to be ſet up by him, he begins, *ver.* 21, to acquaint them, that he muſt ſuffer many things at *Jeruſalem*, and at laſt be killed; and, *ver.* 24, that his followers muſt be ſo far from expecting temporal advantages, power, and grandeur under his government, that they muſt deny themſelves, and take up their croſs, and loſe their lives for his ſake. To induce them to which, he ſets before them the conſideration of the laſt judgment, and of the future rewards and puniſhments to be adminiſtred by him, *ver.* 25, 26, 27. *For whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it: And whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake, ſhall find it. For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? Or what ſhall a man give in*

SERM. XII.

SERM. XII. *exchange for his ſoul? For the Son of man ſhall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels: And then he ſhall reward every man according to his works.* And to confirm this, that he ſhould at laſt execute this part of his government, he tells them, that there were *ſome ſtanding there, which ſhould not taſte of death, till they ſaw the Son of man coming in his kingdom*, i. e. till they ſaw him ſetting up his ſpiritual kingdom, in the diſpenſation of the goſpel, or more thoroughly eſtabliſhing his kingdom, in the deſtruction of the *Jewiſh* polity. And of this his glory and authority, he gives them, ſix days after, a ſort of a type or repreſentation in his transfiguration, of which we have an account in the beginning of the following chapter. *After ſix days*, Jeſus *taketh* Peter, James, *and* John *his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: And his face did ſhine as the ſun, and his raiment was white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them* Moſes *and* Elias *talking with him. Then anſwered* Peter, *and ſaid unto* Jeſus, *Lord, it is good for us to be here: If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for* Moſes, *and one for* Elias. *While he yet ſpake, behold, a bright cloud overſhadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which ſaid, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed; hear ye him,* &c.

&c. *Moſes* and *Elias* muſt give way to Chriſt, *the end of the law and the prophets.* SERM. XII.

In the words of our text we have,

I. A teſtimony of God the Father concerning his Son Jeſus Chriſt, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.*

II. His command, grounded on this teſtimony, *hear ye him*; which was given immediately to the three diſciples then with *Jeſus*, but belonged alſo to the reſt of his diſciples, and concerns us all, who have the goſpel offered to them, with ſufficient evidence and authority; only there is this difference, that the apoſtles and other diſciples then heard him immediately, having perſonal converſation with him; but we muſt hear him in his word, which his ſervants, who had the holy ſpirit to bring all things to their remembrance, which he had ſaid unto them, have faithfully committed to writing.

I. That we may be induced to hear the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let us conſider the teſtimony that God here gives of him; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.* As if he had ſaid, this perſon, *Jeſus* of *Nazareth*, is he of whom *Moſes* in the law, and the prophets did write; he, whom I all along deſigned and promiſed from time to

SERM. XII. time to ſend into the world, to declare my will to men, and whom you *Jews* have always expected, *viz.* the Meſſiah, whom I have ſent to be the Saviour of the world, and the divine teacher of men; and *in him I am well pleaſed*, i. e. I approve of him, and like him well, his undertaking and proceeding is entirely agreeable to my mind; he came to do my will, all that he ſays and does is according to my will, and by my authority. Thus our Saviour's coming into the world was well-pleaſing to God, in token whereof he ſent a multitude of the heavenly hoſt to celebrate his birth. His doctrine was well-pleaſing to him, and therefore he gave him works, even miraculous works to perform, which ſhould bear witneſs to the truth of his miſſion. Thus our Saviour ſpeaks, *John* viii. 29. *He that ſent me is with me: The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always thoſe things that pleaſe him.* His laying down his life was agreeable to his will, as our Saviour again ſpeaks, *John* x. 17. *Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life, that I might take it up again.* In token of this, God raiſed him from the dead, and exalted him at his own right-hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, and gave him a name which is above every name, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church. Thus *John the Baptiſt* ſays, *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand,*

John

John iii. 35. But, to return, let us consider a few things, whereby it appears, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, or Son of God, whom we ought to hear, according to this divine testimony. SERM. XII.

1. All the prophecies relating to the Messiah were exactly fulfilled in our Lord Jesus. The old Testament contains many prophecies concerning the Messiah, some more obscure, and some more plain and clear, and these all agree to our blessed Saviour; they exactly answer to the several circumstances of his birth, life, death, resurrection, and the like, and some of them can agree to no other. It will be too long to insist on all those prophecies of the old Testament that were fulfilled in our Saviour, or to shew the agreement between those prophecies and all the circumstances of his appearance; I shall only mention some that are most obvious and remarkable. As to his descent, he sprang from *Abraham*, and from *Judah*, and from *David*, according to the several promises that were made to them, that the Messiah should be of their race. As to the time of his birth, it was certainly agreeable to *Jacob*'s prophecy, *Gen.* xix. 10. *The sceptre shall not depart from* Judah, *&c.* and to the account we have of *Daniel*'s weeks; and he was born while the second temple was yet standing, according to the prediction of *Haggai*, chap. ii. ver. 6, *&c.* The place of his birth was *Beth-*

SERM. XII.

lehem of *Judea*, agreeable to *Micah*'s prophecy, *chap.* v. 2. and as to the manner of his birth, he was born of a virgin, according to the prophecy of *Iſaiah*, chap. vii. 14. and then the meanneſs of his condition here, is ſo far from being an argument of his not being the Meſſiah, that this character was frequently foretold of the Meſſiah; particularly very largely in *Iſa.* liii. and as to his death, with the circumſtances of it, and his reſurrection, theſe are in ſeveral places of the prophets predicted concerning the Meſſiah. Thus all the prophecies that related to the Meſſiah, did exactly agree to *Jeſus of Nazareth*, our Saviour; and ſome of them ſo agreed to him, as that they could agree to no other perſon.

2. Several teſtimonies were given of him by voices from heaven, and by heavenly glory ſurrounding him; God in expreſs words declared him *to be his beloved Son*, and ſo teſtified that he was the Meſſiah. We have three inſtances, in the goſpel, of God's ſpeaking to our Saviour, and teſtifying his miſſion from heaven. The firſt is at his baptiſm, when he was juſt entring on his publick miniſtry, at which time alſo the Holy Spirit viſibly bore witneſs to him, *Matt.* iii. 16, 17. *And Jeſus, when he was baptized, went up ſtraightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he ſaw the Spirit of God deſcending like a dove* (not in the ſhape of a dove; but deſcending as a dove deſcends) *and lighting upon him: And lo, a voice from*

from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. The second instance is at his transfiguration, when the same words were heard from heaven by *Peter*, *James* and *John*, with the addition of the precept, *hear ye him*, as in our text; and at this time he was also clothed with glory; he was transfigured before them, and *his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as light*, Matt. xvii. beg. The last instance is just before his passion, *John* xii. 28. where, when he prayed, *Father, glorify thy name*, we are told, *There came a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* To these testimonies from heaven may be added what came to pass at his crucifixion, as the extraordinary darkness, the rending of the vail, the earthquake, *&c.* which, when the centurion, and they that were with him saw, they said, *Truly this was the Son of God.* SERM. XII.

3. That Jesus was the Messiah, or Son of God, appears by his miracles, and wonderful works, of which his life, during his ministry, was full. These were convincing proofs of his divine mission, and made it plainly appear, that he came from God. Our Saviour did the works of his Father, which shewed that he was sent by him, and made it most reasonable to believe that he was the Messiah. *John* v. 36. *But I have greater witness than that of* John; *for the works that the Father hath given me to finish, the*

SERM. XII. *the ſame works that I do bear witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me.* The miracles of Chriſt were very numerous, and were ſo open and manifeſt, that his greateſt adverſaries could never have the face to deny them. We have many general accounts of his miracles in the goſpel, for they were too many to be all particularly recorded: He healed the ſick, cured the lame, cleanſed the lepers, gave ſight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, caſt out devils, and raiſed the dead, and all this with a word, or a touch; this general account we often have, but many particular miracles are alſo recorded, which come under all theſe heads. And beſides theſe miracles which he wrought on perſons, he did many other wonderful works; he turned water into wine, ſtilled tempeſts, fed the people miraculouſly, and the like. And thus was *Jeſus of Nazareth a man approved of God, by miracles, and wonders, and ſigns which God did by him.* And, as the apoſtle *Peter* ſpeaks, *God anointed him with the Holy Ghoſt, and with power.*

4. That Jeſus is the Meſſiah, or Son of God, appears by his reſurrection from the dead; which article the apoſtle chiefly inſiſted on the belief of, it being neceſſary to the belief of his being the Meſſiah, and of conſequence cauſing this belief. Our Saviour had more than once told his diſciples, that, as he ſhould be put to death, ſo he would

would rise again the third day; and as that, so this came to pass according to his predictions; as he was put to death by the *Jews*, so on the third day he revived, and God raised him from the dead. If our Saviour had not risen again, the credit of his mission, and consequently of his doctrine, would soon have failed; his enemies would have triumphed over him, and his friends would have looked upon themselves to be disappointed; for after his death they soon fell into doubts and perplexities of mind, and they would no doubt have quickly forgotten him, had he not shewn himself to them alive again. See how doubtful the two disciples speak of him in their journey to *Emmaus*, *Luke* xxiv. 21. *But we trusted, that it had been he which should have redeemed* Israel: They believed once that he was the Messiah, but now their hopes of him were almost extinguished, they knew not what to think of him. But on the third day, as I said, after his death, he in an awful and glorious manner rose from the dead, and appeared to his disciples; and so baffled the insults of his adversaries, and revived the hopes of his pious friends, and confirmed them in the belief that he was the Messiah, by frequent converse with them, at times, for forty days. Thus was that expression in the *Psalms* made good in him, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* And he was declared to be

SERM. XII.

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SERM. XII. *the Son of God with power, by the reſurrection from the dead*, Rom. i. 4. To this may be added, his aſcenſion into heaven in the ſight of his apoſtles.

5. To the ſame purpoſe we muſt conſider the miraculous effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt on the day of *Pentecoſt*, and at other times. Our Saviour had often promiſed his diſciples, that he would ſend the Holy Spirit to them from the Father; and certainly, if he had not been the Son of God, in whom he was well pleaſed, he could never have made this promiſe good; if he had not been the Meſſiah, he could not have baptized with the Holy Ghoſt; but, as the apoſtle *Peter* ſays, *Being by the right-hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this which ye now ſee and hear*, Acts ii. 33. At the beginning of the ſame *chapter* we have an account of this wonderful tranſaction, *viz.* that on *the day of Pentecoſt*, a few days after our Lord's aſcenſion, when the diſciples were together, *there came ſuddenly a ſound from heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty wind, and it filled all the houſe where they were ſitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it ſat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and began to ſpeak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*, ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. And we have ſeveral

ral particular inſtances of the like nature, in the hiſtory of the *Acts*. SERM. XII.

6. Hereto we may add the miracles that the diſciples and followers of Chriſt did in his name, as another proof of his being the Meſſiah. Our Saviour ſent out his diſciples to work miracles in *Judea* whilſt he was with them on earth, and after his aſcenſion they went out and did the ſame in all the world. He had promiſed, that thoſe who believed on his name ſhould have the power of doing wonderful works; ſo that not only the apoſtles, and thoſe that followed Chriſt on earth, but other believers alſo did miracles in his name after his departure hence. This ſerved wonderfully to confirm the truth of his reſurrection, and ſo of his being the Meſſiah. We have an account of ſome particular miracles of the apoſtles, which they wrought openly in ſeveral parts of the world, conveyed down to us; and many, very many more they did, which are not particularly recorded; they healed the ſick, cured the lame, caſt out devils, raiſed the dead, and the like. And that they ſhould do theſe miracles in the name of Jeſus, after his death, and reſurrection, and aſcenſion, was certainly an argument that God had made him both Lord and Chriſt.

7. To what has been ſaid, we muſt add, as a further confirmation that Jeſus is the Son of God, or the Meſſiah, that the doctrine

SERM. XII. which he delivered, and the religion which he eſtabliſhed, is altogether pure and reaſonable, and worthy of God. This indeed, of itſelf, is no proof, for a perſon may teach very good things, and yet not do it by virtue of ſuch a divine commiſſion; but this, together with the foregoing conſiderations, is of great weight, and even abſolutely neceſſary. For whatever miracles were wrought to prove that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, if his doctrine was manifeſtly unreaſonable and unworthy the divine Being, they ought not to be of any force; but if, while all other things concur to prove him to be the Meſſiah, his doctrine be every way good and juſt, there remains no doubt of the divine commiſſion of its author. Thus have I conſidered how it appears that Jeſus is the Son of God, or the Meſſiah, according to this divine teſtimony, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.*

II. I come now briefly to conſider the divine precept, grounded on the foregoing teſtimony, *Hear ye him.* As Chriſt is the Son of God, the Meſſiah, the great Prophet that ſhould come into the world to teach us, and to inſtruct us in the divine will, he ought certainly to be heard, *i. e.* in ſhort, to be attended to, and obeyed.

In treating on this head, I ſhall,

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SERM. XII.

1. Shew what it is that Chriſt teaches, wherein we ought to hear him.
2. How we ſhould hear him.

1. What it is that Chriſt teaches us, and wherein we ought to hear him. The whole doctrine of Chriſt may be ſuppoſed to be contained under theſe general heads.

1. His precepts and inſtructions, that reſpect our practice.
2. Thoſe that reſpect our belief.
3. His threatnings.
4. His promiſes.

1ſt, We ſhould hear Chriſt in his precepts, or in thoſe things which he commands us to obſerve in our practice. As our Saviour came into the world with a deſign to reform it, ſo, for this end, he delivered to men precepts and directions full of holineſs, juſtice and goodneſs, for the ordering of their actions. Some of the precepts of Chriſt are indeed merely poſitive, but moſt of them are of a moral nature. The poſitive precepts of Chriſt are theſe two, *viz.* that of baptiſm, and the Lord's ſupper; and here we ought to hear Chriſt, ſo as to perform theſe ordinances regularly, according to his appointment. Baptiſm ſhould be adminiſtered in ſuch a manner, and to ſuch perſons, as he has directed, and for theſe ends and purpoſes which he has deſigned; and the ſame is to be

SERM. XII.

be obſerved of the Lord's ſupper; and all manner of moral duties, reſpecting every condition and relation, are recommended in the goſpel of Chriſt to very great advantage. Therein we are taught to exerciſe piety towards God, juſtice and charity to our neighbour, and temperance and ſobriety with regard to ourſelves. Chriſt teaches us to worſhip God in ſpirit and in truth, to love him, and truſt in him, to pray to him, and to give him the higheſt adoration. He commands us to love our neighbour as ourſelves, and to be juſt, and merciful, and charitable, to do good to all as we have opportunity, to love our enemies, and to do to others as we would reaſonably have them do to us. *Finally*, As to the government of ourſelves, he would have us to be humble and modeſt, ſober and temperate, patient and contented, to raiſe our thoughts above this world to the reward that is in heaven, to beware of covetouſneſs, to take heed, leaſt at any time our hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life. Now, all ſuch precepts and directions as theſe, which Chriſt has given us, we ought to attend to, and ſincerely to comply with.

2*dly*, We ſhould hear Chriſt in thoſe precepts and directions, with reſpect our belief. As the word of Chriſt ought to direct our practice, ſo it ſhould alſo direct our faith. Whatever our Saviour has laid down in the goſpel

gospel for truth, that we ought to receive, and to give our assent to be governed by; tho' indeed some truths are of vastly more importance than others. In the gospel we are taught these important things, *viz.* what thoughts we should entertain concerning God, and his several attributes and perfections; and we are particularly directed to the belief of his wonderful grace and mercy displayed in that dispensation, and in our redemption wrought out by Jesus Christ. The gospel leads us to believe in Christ, to believe Jesus to be the Messiah, the Son of God, our Saviour and lawgiver, our king and judge. It requires us to believe the resurrection of the dead, and the judgment to come. Thus we should hear Christ as to what we ought to believe.

SERM. XII.

3*dly*, We should hear Christ in his threatnings. As Christ has delivered laws to us, so he has guarded them with sanctions, and has added threatenings to the breach of them; and these threatnings are of the severest punishment to be inflicted, not in this world, but in that which is to come. Christ has revealed the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. No less than everlasting destruction, eternal perdition, and the dreadful effects of the wrath to come are threatened in the gospel to the impenitent, and to obstinate unbelievers. These threatenings are designed to deter us from sin, and to reduce us to obedience; and they

SERM. XII. ought to influence us, ſo as to make us avoid every thing that is unlawful, and to prevail on us to comply with the laws of Chriſt.

4thly, We ſhould alſo hear Chriſt in his promiſes. As the threatenings of the goſpel are deſigned to affright us from ſin, ſo the promiſes of it are made to encourage us in obeying the precepts of Chriſt, and to excite us to the practice of holineſs and righteouſneſs; and we ought ſo to hear Chriſt in theſe promiſes, as to be induced thereby to become his ſincere followers. The promiſes of the goſpel are very many, and great, they are exceeding great and precious promiſes, they are all of a ſpiritual and heavenly nature, they deſerve our greateſt regard and attention, and ſhould, as they well might, prevail on us to be holy. The forgiveneſs of ſins, eternal life, and a bleſſed immortality are promiſed in the goſpel, through Chriſt, to the penitent believer. *Finally*, Deliverance from all kind of evil, and the enjoyment of the higheſt happineſs for ever, are therein aſſigned for the portion of every ſincere chriſtian. Thus we ſee what Chriſt teaches us, and wherein we ought to hear him.

2. Let us now conſider how he is to be heard by us.

1ſt, We ſhould hear Chriſt impartially, *i. e.* we ſhould have a due regard for all the truths which he has declared. We ſhould not only mind thoſe parts of his doctrine which

which ſuit moſt our humour, or natural diſ- SERM.
poſition, but we ſhould have reſpect to thoſe XII.
parts of it alſo which thwart our natural in-
clination, and croſs our worldly advantage. We ſhould regard what he would have us practice, as well as what he requires us to believe, and ſhould mind his threatenings as well as his promiſes. We ſhould not neglect any precept of the goſpel, nor diſregard any divine truth. All that Chriſt has ſaid ſhould be attended to by us, and every precept of his doctrine ſhould have due influence on us. We ought to lay aſide all prejudice in the ſtudy of his word, and to make as good a judgment of it as we can, according to the beſt of our knowledge; and ſhould take care that we be not too partial or inſincere in our obedience to his will.

2dly, We ſhould hear Chriſt with diligence. Diligence is neceſſary in any good work whatſoever, if we would perform it as we ought; much more is it neceſſary in ſo great and important an affair, as this duty before us, which contains all manner of good works. We ſhould not hear Chriſt with a careleſs and negligent diſpoſition, but we ſhould attend to what he has declared to us, with care and application of mind. Diligence is neceſſary in order to underſtand aright what Chriſt has ſaid to us; diligence is neceſſary in order to remember it; and dili-

SERM. XII. gence is neceſſary, if we would embrace it, and put it in practice and perſevere in it.

3*dly*, We ſhould hear him only. We ſhould hear no one elſe in religious matters; we may hear them for inſtruction, but not to build our faith upon what they ſay; we ſhould own no other Lord over our conſciences; he only has power to make laws in religion, or the ſervice of God, and he only ought to be obeyed herein. The commandments of men, in the worſhip of God, ſhould be diſregarded by us; their promiſes and threatenings in religious matters ſhould not affect us. If any one will pretend to teach us, by adding to Chriſt's laws, and by taking from them, or any ways altering them, we ſhould diſregard him, and turn away from him, and not hear him in it: Neither ſhould we hear any one that would interpoſe his own interpretation of Chriſt's laws on us; for that is but making Chriſt's laws his own laws, and claiming that reſpect from us that is due to Chriſt only. But let us not *call any one rabbi, or maſter on earth, ſeeing one is our maſter, even Chriſt.*

4*thly*, Tho' I have all along almoſt taken this to be the import of the words, it may nevertheleſs be proper to mention it by itſelf, *viz.* that we ought to hear the word of Chriſt ſo, as to do it. All our hearing ſhould be in order to our inſtruction, and all our inſtruction

instruction should be in order to practice. Thus *James*, chap. i. 22. *Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*, &c. And our Saviour likens him that hears his sayings, and does them, to a wise man, and declares the safety, stability, and happiness of such a one; but he that hears his sayings, and does them not, he likens to a foolish man, whose end will be misery and ruin, *Matt.* vii. 24, 25, 26, 27. Thus have I considered the duty of hearing Christ the Son of God. SERM. XII.

I shall now conclude with a few serious reflections on what has been said.

1. We see here the truth and certainty of the christian dispensation. 'Tis the Son of God, who is the author of it, whom God bore witness to from heaven. This very instance of the transfiguration the apostle *Peter* makes use of, to prove the certainty and divine authority of the christian religion; 2 *Pet.* i. 16, 17, 18. *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent Glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy*

SERM. XII. *mount.* And if we conſider further the fulfilment of prophecy, the miracles that our Saviour wrought, his reſurrection from the dead, the effuſion of the Holy Spirit, the miracles of his followers, and the reaſonableneſs and goodneſs of the chriſtian doctrine itſelf, the truth and certainty of it muſt evidently appear.

2. We may hence infer the excellency of the chriſtian doctrine. One would certainly conclude, that the more excellent the perſon is, the more excellent would be the diſpenſation of which he is the author; and as the Son of God is the moſt excellent perſon that ever appeared in the world, ſo the chriſtian religion, eſtabliſhed by him, is certainly moſt excellent. Thus the author to the *Hebrews* goes about to argue the excellency of our oeconomy, from the excellency of Chriſt's perſon, *chap.* i. 1, 2, *&c. God, who at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpoke in time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets, hath, in the laſt days, ſpoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the worlds,* &c.

3. We may hence alſo conclude, the ſufficiency of the chriſtian diſpenſation. Certainly the Son of God would not come into the world to give us an imperfect revelation of the will of God, I mean ſuch a revelation, as would not anſwer the ends for which it

was

was designed; far be it from us to think so of our blessed Saviour! But he has declared to us, all that is necessary in order to our eternal happiness: There is nothing wanting in his precepts, nothing in the matters of belief that he has revealed; there is nothing wanting in his threatenings, nor deficient in his promises; but there is enough in the gospel to make us wise unto salvation, for therein all the counsel of God is contained. SERM. XII.

4. How much then are they to blame, who hear others besides Christ; who follow the commandments, and traditions, and interpretations of men instead of the laws of Christ; who are not contented to have Christ alone for their master, but must join others with him, as if his doctrine was not sufficient: Certainly this is to reflect dishonour upon Christ, as if he was not a sufficient, or faithful, or intelligible lawgiver, but we must be forced to have recourse to men for a supplement to his revelation, or for the interpretation of his laws. Let christians be ashamed of this, and consider how much they dishonour the Saviour by this practice. But,

5. How much more wicked yet are they, who are so bold as to make and defend innovations in the christian religion; to set up human inventions in the room of Christ's laws, and to impose their own interpretations

SERM. XII. terpretations for chriſtian doctrine: This is ſo far from hearing Chriſt, that it is downright rebelling againſt him; it is to take his authority out of his hands, and to ſet themſelves up in his place. Therefore, leaving all ſuch practices, and all ſuch teachers, let us,

6. Bleſs God for the wonderful revelation that his Son has given us: Let us praiſe him for ſending ſuch a teacher and inſtructor; let us give him thanks for the wonderful diſcovery of his grace in the goſpel, and for the means of ſalvation which he has afforded us. Let us bleſs his name for the moſt excellent precepts and inſtructions that our Saviour has given us; for the threatenings he has denounced to deter us from ſin, that we may eſcape eternal death, and for the promiſes he has made to encourage us to holineſs, that we might obtain life everlaſting. And,

Laſtly, Let us all obey this divine command, *viz.* to hear the Son of God. Let us hear him in his precepts, in his promiſes, and in his threatenings, and in every thing he ſays unto us. Let us attend to the holy ſcriptures, wherein the doctrine of Chriſt is contained, that we may be thoroughly acquainted with it. Let us hear Chriſt with impartiality, let us hear him with diligence, let us hear him only, rejecting all other authority in matters of religion.

Finally,

Finally, Let us hear the words of Chriſt, ſo as to do them, and to obey his commandments; that we may not be ſo unhappy as to deceive ourſelves, but being not *forgetful hearers, but doers of the work, may be bleſſed in our deed.*

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SERMON XIII.

Of being, by GOD, in CHRIST.

1 COR. i. 30.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

SERM. XIII.

THIS epistle was written to the believers in Christ, at *Corinth*, a famous city of *Achaia*, where a very considerable church was planted by the apostle's ministry: He tarried there for some time, preaching Christ to the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and had converted many to the faith. But in the space of some years absence, as it commonly fell out in many churches, certain persons, or as it rather seems, one certain person, got in amongst them, and caused great disorders in this church of Christ, by endeavouring to draw off their minds from the apostle, and by raising a faction against him, cunningly insinuating some defect in his conduct, carping at his behaviour towards them, and endeavouring to represent him mean and little

little in their eyes, and by this means seeking to advance himself in contempt of the apostle, corrupting their faith and practice, and causing heats, contentions and divisions amongst them. And the better to effect this his selfish and worldly design, he addressed himself, it seems, to them in fine, artful and lofty speeches, making a great shew of wisdom; which took very much with the *Corinthians*, and was very likely to draw them aside, and this made them conceited, and puffed them up with pride for this their leader, and drew them into a contempt of the apostle's plain and honest way of preaching the gospel. This sad effect it already had upon some amongst them, whom this false apostle had actually drawn to his party, and others were in danger of being prevailed upon and seduced by him, which gave occasion to the apostle of writing this epistle to them, wherein he treats them mildly and warily, for fear of offending them, and vindicates himself from those unjust and invidious reflections that were cast on him, by this ill designing person; endeavouring to preserve those, who still adhered to the truth, from being influenced by him, and to reclaim those whom he had led aside, into those great and foul disorders. And in the beginning of this epistle, after he had told them, that he was acquainted with their divisions, had pathetically exhorted them to unity,

Serm. XIII.

unity, and let them know, that he was so far from setting himself up for a leader or head of a party amongst them, that he thanked God he had baptized but two or three of them, lest any should say he had baptized in his own name: He begins to strike at the root of that, which the false apostle so much boasted of, and whereby he seeked to gain applause amongst them, *viz.* that which he calls wisdom of words. He shews how disagreeable the fine and artful strains of eloquence, or the enticing words of man's wisdom were to the plain doctrine of Christ crucified, and in a wonderful manner declares, how God set aside all human wisdom and art, in the first publishing of the gospel to the world, and instead of that, made use of a plain and undisguised way of preaching, and the power of miracles to recommend it; that so the christian faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. And to cut of all glorying in men, and to induce them to glory in the Lord only, he tells them, in the words of our text, *Of him*, i. e. *of God, are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.* In treating of which words, I shall endeavour,

I. To shew what is meant by being in Christ Jesus.

II. How

II. How it is of God, that perſons are in Chriſt Jeſus. SERM. XIII.

III. To explain the bleſſings of the goſpel here enumerated, *wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption.*

I. What are we to underſtand by being in Chriſt Jeſus? Now,

Perſons are ſaid to be in Chriſt Jeſus, when they believe in him, and acknowledge the doctrine of the goſpel. This ſeems to be the meaning of this phraſe, in the ſeveral places of ſcripture where it is uſed. Whatever further ſenſe may be commonly put upon it, perſons are ſaid to be in Chriſt, as they are profeſſed chriſtians, without a direct regard to any other character, whereby ſome chriſtians are diſtinguiſhed from others. Some that are in Chriſt, live diſagreeable to character, or to the goſpel, which they profeſs, and will come under the condemnation of it, as is implied, *Rom.* viii. 1. where the apoſtle tells us, *There is no condemnation to thoſe in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit.* Whatever denominates a man a chriſtian, upon the account of that, he is ſaid to be in Chriſt; and as believing in Chriſt, and profeſſing the goſpel, denominate a man a chriſtian; ſo he is ſaid to be in Chriſt on theſe accounts, though ſomething more be neceſſary to the character of a ſincere or good chriſtian, *viz.* a

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SERM. XIII.

christian life and conversation. So then being in Christ, according to the scripture manner of expression, signifies being christians, believing and professing the gospel. Thus the apostle speaks of *Andronicus* and *Junius*, that they were in Christ before him, *Rom.* i. 6, 7. *i. e.* they were believers, and professed christians before him, and so we read of the churches of *Judea* which were in Christ, *i. e.* were christian churches; and the apostle says, he *knew a man in Christ*, *i. e.* a man who was a christian, *caught up into the third heaven.* A man that only believes, and makes no profession of the gospel, as many of the *Jews* did, can hardly be said to be in Christ, as he cannot properly be called a christian; both are necessary to the character of being in Christ, and for obtaining the salvation offered in the gospel, according to *Rom.* x. 9. *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* Thus therefore, when the apostle says, *Of him are ye in Christ Jesus*, it is as if he had said, it is of God, that ye are christians, or brought over to the faith of Christ.

II. I am next to shew, how it is of God, that persons are in Christ Jesus; particularly, how it was of God, that these *Corinthians*, and the rest of the first christians, were in him. And here we may do well to take

notice, that this is not at all said, to exclude man's free choice, but does altogether suppose it; and indeed, though many who had it offered to them, freely embraced it; yet others, who had it offered to them, with equal advantages from God, did as willfully reject it. When therefore it is said to be of God, that persons are in Christ Jesus, thus much is to be understood by it, *viz.* that their being in Christ, is wholly of God's appointment; and that he proposed the christian religion to them with such marks and characters, as entirely recommended it to their choice, and rendered it altogether fit for a rational mind to embrace. But more particulaly,

1st, The whole christian religion or the gospel is from God. The entire design and contrivance of it, from the beginning to the end, is of him. All the parts of this wonderful dispensation, owe their original to his good pleasure, and their sanction to his divine authority. This religion is altogether of his appointment; not any part of it is of human invention, or derived from human pleasure and authority, but God is the author of it in every respect. He designed, from the beginning, to set up this dispensation, and gave frequent promises of it, from one time to another: And he, at last, *sent his Son into the world, in the likeness of sinful flesh*, to transact with men, and to make a clear revelation of his will to them. And all

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Serm. XIII.

the works, that our bleſſed Saviour did on earth, were the works of him that ſent him: All the words that he ſpake, were the words of his heavenly Father: All the precepts, that he delivered, were his precepts: All the promiſes he made, were his promiſes: All the threatenings, which he denounced, were his threatenings: Finally, the terms of ſalvation, which he propoſed, were agreeable to the will of God, and entirely of his appointment: And ſo the whole chriſtian diſpenſation is from him only. In the goſpel, *Old things are paſt away, and all things are made new*, and all things are of God, and he is the author of the new creation. And thus the apoſtles *followed not cunningly deviſed fables*, when they made known to the world the power, and coming, and doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, but delivered things that were certain and truly divine. Whatever religion we embrace, if the religion itſelf be not of God, our embracing it will ſignify nothing, as being not of God neither; but the chriſtian religion being of God's appointment, our being of this religion, *i. e.* our being in Chriſt, muſt be of God.

2*dly*, It is of God, that men are in Chriſt Jeſus, in that he deſigned, and purpoſed from the beginning, to call them to ſalvation by faith in Chriſt. It is plain from the old Teſtament, that the Meſſiah was promiſed to the *Jews*; and it is certain, that it

it was of God, that any of them were in Christ. And as to the *Gentiles*, whom the apostle here chiefly intends, who were the greater part of this church at *Corinth*, and whose equality with them under the gospel, the *Jews* commonly cavilled at; as to some of them, I say, it is also certain, that God designed, from the beginning of the world to call them to the faith of Christ. Of this there are some obscure hints in the old Testament, which, indeed, made it not so plain, but that it was justly esteemed a mystery, till the time of the gospel, the revelation whereof to him the apostle so much glories in: For it was then so plainly revealed, that God had all along a design to call the *Gentiles* to be his people, by faith in Christ Jesus, that the apostle very frequently, in lofty and glorious expressions, extols this wonderful grace. Particularly, 2 *Tim.* i. 9. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began,* πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων, before the times of the ages, or a great many ages since, or before the *Jewish* dispensation, as particularly in the promise to *Abraham*, that *in him, all the families of the earth should be blessed.* Thus also, *Eph.* i. 4. *According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without* SERM. XIII.

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SERM. XIII.

blame before him in love, i. e. God determined before the foundation of the world, to call them to the faith of Chriſt, to the end, that they might be a holy people to himſelf, and might be conformed to the image of his Son, in righteouſneſs and true holineſs. The *Gentiles* were a long time dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and had no hope at all of ſalvation by Chriſt; but when they were thus afar off, and none ſo much as imagined, that they were to become God's people under the Meſſias, then had God, all along, a gracious deſign and purpoſe of calling them to the faith of Chriſt. Well therefore, might the apoſtle tell the *Corinthians, of God, are ye in Chriſt Jeſus.*

3*dly*, For a further illuſtration of this head, it was of God, that they were in Chriſt Jeſus; for in the fulneſs of time, when his purpoſe and promiſe was to be performed and fulfilled, he ſent the goſpel amongſt them, and gave his ſervants a commiſſion, to call them to the faith of Chriſt. In the beginning of chriſtianity, it was neceſſary, that perſons, in order to their embracing the goſpel, ſhould have ſome ſent to them to acquaint them thoroughly with it; and not only ſo, but alſo, that they ſhould ſee it accompanied with ſufficient evidence and authority; in order whereunto, the preachers of it, were to be furniſhed with the power of working miracles, for the confirmation of

of it: For as the apoſtle ſays, *How ſhould they call on him, in whom they have not believed? and how ſhould they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how ſhould they hear without a preacher? and how ſhould they preach except they be ſent?* Rom. x. 14, 15. Thus then, accordingly, the apoſtles were ſent into all the world, to preach Chriſt and his religion, plainly, clearly and intelligibly to mankind, to declare to them the counſel of God: They were ſent alſo with the power of miracles, which were an infallible proof of the doctrine they preached, of their miſſion coming from God. Our bleſſed Saviour himſelf preached the kingdom of God to the *Jews*, and wrought miracles amongſt them: And his apoſtles, by virtue of their divine miſſion, did the ſame in all the world. St. *Paul* was, in an eminent manner, the apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, being chiefly appointed thereto by God; and thus he preached to theſe *Corinthians*, and by his miracles amongſt them, recommended the chriſtian robe to their reception; as he tells them, 2 *Epiſt.* xii. 12. *Truly the ſigns of an apoſtle were wrought among you, in all patience, in ſigns and wonders, and mighty deeds.* Thus was the preaching of the goſpel attended with ſuch marks and characters, as fully proved it to be a divine inſtitution, and made it every way fit for rational beings to receive. And this com-

SERM. XIII.

SERM. XIII. miſſion to preach the goſpel, and power of miracles, which was altogether neceſſary to recommend it, being of God; it muſt certainly be of him that perſons were in Chriſt Jeſus. It is alſo of God, that perſons, at this day, are in Chriſt, ſeeing by his providence, his word is preſerved down to us, which is agreeable to the higheſt reaſon, and we have very competent proof of the miracles, which were wrought for the confirmation of the goſpel. But as for thoſe chriſtians, who never examine the religion they profeſs, as it is owing to cuſtom only, or ſome ſuch thing, that they are chriſtians, ſo their chriſtianity is of but very little account. Thus we ſee how it was of God, that theſe *Corinthians* were in Chriſt; the whole chriſtian religion is of God; it was the divine purpoſe, that they, with other *Gentiles*, ſhould be called to the faith of Chriſt; and it was owing to the divine power and operation accompanying the goſpel, that they were prevailed on to embrace it.

III. I come now to ſpeak a little to the bleſſings of the goſpel, as they are here related by the apoſtle, when he ſays, *who of God is made unto us, i. e.* us chriſtians, us believers, us who are in Chriſt Jeſus, *wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption.* Of theſe I ſhall briefly treat in their order.

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1*ſt*, The firſt bleſſing, which the apoſtle mentions, which we have by Chriſt under the goſpel, is *wiſdom*, *i. e.* he, by the diſcoveries, which he has made, and the inſtructions he has given in the goſpel, teaches men the trueſt and beſt wiſdom: Which will appear, if we conſider the excellent knowledge, that the goſpel of Chriſt conveys to us; for the goſpel may be conſidered, as containing a clear revelation of the prophecies concerning the Meſſias, and his kingdom, a full declaration of the will of God, with reſpect to what he requires of us, and a diſcovery of the higheſt happineſs, together with the means, whereby we may come at the enjoyment of it. They who are in Chriſt, may have the knowledge of thoſe things from the goſpel, which if we conſider, we ſhall ſee, how Chriſt is indeed made wiſdom to ſuch.—1. The prophecies of the old Teſtament relating to the Meſſias, were by the goſpel, opened and explained. Many prophecies were from time to time delivered concerning the Meſſias, his coming, and what he was to do on earth, the greatneſs and bleſſings of his kingdom, the extent of his government, and the like; which were, indeed, ſufficient to make thoſe earneſtly expect him, to whom theſe prophecies were committed, but gave little or no hope to the greater part of mankind, and were delivered in terms ſo obſcure and difficult to be under-

SERM. XIII.

Serm. XIII. stood, as that those who had them, could form but very dark and uncertain notions of what was contained in them, till their completion at the Messiah's coming. Then, indeed, they who thought not of any such thing, could see plainly, that Christ ought to have suffered, and to have risen from the dead on the third day; they who dreamt of temporal and worldly advantages under the Messiah's government, were made sensible that his kingdom was not of this world, but that the administration of it, and the privileges and blessings, that belonged to it, were altogether spiritual: Then, they who before imagined that the benefits of his kingdom should be confined to the nation of the *Jews*, or at least, that they were chiefly to be enjoyed by them, were made to understand, that the *Gentiles* were to have not only a share, but an equal part with the *Jews* therein. Such glorious things were signified in the predictions relating to the Messias, that many prophets, and righteous men, and kings, desired to see and hear them. The things contained in the mysterious prophecies of the old Testament, were so excellent, that the apostle calls them *the wisdom of God*, which under the gospel was manifested to them, and by them to the world, 1 *Cor.* ii. 7, *&c. We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world, unto*

to our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit. And the mystery of the calling of the *Gentiles* to be God's people, through faith in the Messias, which, in other ages, was not made known unto the sons of men, the apostle particularly glories in, as being revealed to them, and by them made known to all nations.— 2*dly*, We may also consider the gospel of Christ, as containing a full and clear declaration of the will of God, with regard to what he requires of us; and the knowledge of the divine will in this respect, is certainly to be esteemed most excellent. The perfection of our nature consists in our conformity to the divine will, which makes us, as it were, like God; and the more of this will we know, the more certainly we may become like to our Creator; but nothing can give us so exact a knowledge of this will of God, as the gospel of Christ, wherein a full discovery of it is made. The *Gentiles* had only the light of nature, which was divers ways very much obscured, to lead them to the knowledge of the divine will; and the revelation of God's will to the *Jews*, was designed to be sub-

SERM. XIII.

SERM. XIII.

ſervient to the introduction of a more clear and full revelation of it by the goſpel, wherein the whole counſel of God is contained. For therein, whatever it is his will we ſhould believe and practice, is diſcovered to us. The will of God with regard to our faith, or what we ought to believe, is ſo clearly expreſſed in the goſpel, that if men would but come to it with an unprejudiced mind, they could not miſs of it. And as to our converſation and practice, it is certain, that by the goſpel of Chriſt, we may be thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works. The goſpel teaches us to worſhip God in ſpirit and in truth; to love our neighbour as ourſelves, and by what acts we ſhould diſcover this love; to govern ourſelves, in all reſpects as we ought, and, finally, to maintain a converſation every way agreeable to the divine will, *to deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*. The goſpel teaches us, that the *wiſdom which is from above, is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, and eaſy to be entreated.*—3*dly*, We may conſider the goſpel under this view alſo, *viz.* as containing a diſcovery of the higheſt happineſs, and giving us all proper directions, with regard to the means, whereby we may come to the enjoyment of it. He is certainly a wiſe man, who propoſes to himſelf a good end, and makes uſe of ſuitable methods to attain it: This wiſdom, in the higheſt degree, the goſpel of Chriſt teaches; whilſt it

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sets before us no less than eternal life, a blessed immortality, a crown of glory, and an everlasting inheritance; and teaches us to believe in him, and to repent of our sins, and to follow after righteousness, in order to obtain it. Our Saviour has not only declared to us the will of God with respect to our duty, but has made known to us his will with respect to our happiness; and by him faith and a holy conversation is declared to be the way to come at the enjoyment of it; which he has not only described plainly in the gospel, but has given us all proper motives to stir us up to it; has warned us of the danger of temptation, and taught us to use diligence and circumspection in order to escape it. *Finally*, He has admonished us to avoid all sin, which is followed with misery and death, and to follow after holiness, the end whereof will be everlasting life. Thus are we made wise unto salvation thro' faith which is in Christ Jesus, or by the christian religion; and so have I shewn you how *Christ is made to us wisdom*; and he is made so to men in these respects, by his teaching and preaching whilst he was on the earth, by giving his holy spirit to the apostles, to bring all things to their remembrance which he had said unto them, and by sending them forth to preach the gospel to all the world. SERM. XIII.

2*dly*, The second blessing mentioned by the apostle which we have by Christ under the gospel, is righteousness; *Christ is made unto*

Serm. XIII. *unto us righteousness.* Whereby indeed may be meant, that we are made righteous by Christ, or reduced to the practice of righteousness; seeing the gospel contains the most perfect rule of righteousness, requires us sincerely to follow it, and gives us all necessary assistance therein. But I rather take righteousness here to signify that justification which is frequently mentioned in scripture, whereby the divine grace or favour absolves men, who sincerely embrace the gospel, and persevere in the faith of Christ, from the guilt of their transgression, and treats them as if they were perfectly righteous persons. The apostle tells us, *That all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:* As all were sinners, so all had forfeited eternal life, and were liable to everlasting death; and consequently, whatever they afterwards did, yet, being sinners, they must still remain liable to death, and could not, by their own works, procure life eternal for themselves. True indeed, we all die in *Adam*, as the apostle speaks; but besides this, we have all deserved death by our own transgressions; we are all sinners, and if ever we are justified, it must be of the divine grace or favour. And thus it hath pleased God to appoint a righteousness, or method of justification for us in the gospel, *even that which is by faith in Christ.* The *Gentiles*, tho' they were never under the law of *Moses*, yet were all

all under sin; and tho' the *Jews* had the law, yet it was plain, that *by the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified in the sight of God*; but now, as the apostle says, *the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace, thro' the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*, Rom. iii. 21, &c. In this justification our sins are forgiven, and our transgressions pardoned; nay, this justification consisteth in the remission of our sins; as, *Rom.* iv. 6, 7, 8. even as *David* also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.* And they who are thus justified, are entitled to eternal life, or a blessed immortality, as if they were perfectly righteous persons, *Tit.* iii. 7. *That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.* This justification we obtain by *the death of Christ*, who offered himself a sacrifice for sin; *he was made sin*, i. e, a sin-offering for us, *that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* And all who sincerely

SERM. XIII.

SERM. XIII.

sincerely believe in Christ, or embrace the gospel, are thus justified. And thus is Christ made to us righteousness.

3*dly*, Another blessing we receive by the gospel of Christ, is sanctification; *Christ is made unto us sanctification.* This word signifies a setting apart, or separating from common use, and devoting to God: And by this expression may be meant, that by Christ we are set apart to be the people of God. Thus the apostle, speaking of these christians at *Corinth*, says, *To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints*, 1st Epist. i. 2. And thus the apostle *Peter* speaks, 1st *Epist.* ii. 9. *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.* Before our Saviour's coming, the *Jews* only were blessed with this privilege of being the people of God; but under the gospel the *Gentiles* were to be made equal with them in this privilege, they were to be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the promise of God in Christ; and thus the apostle tells them, that they *are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the houshold of God*, Eph. ii. 19. And tho' before Christ's coming the foundation of this privilege to the *Jews*, and that which distinguished them from others of God's people, was their voluntary subjection to the law of *Moses*; now, under the gospel, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* become God's people

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no otherwiſe than by faith in Chriſt; this only is the ground of this privilege now, and by this only we are entitled to this high character, *We are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus.* Thoſe among the *Jews*, who believed in Jeſus, remained ſtill the people of God, tho' upon another footing; and they, who were unbelieving, were rejected from being his people; and this privilege the *Gentiles* only enjoyed by faith. But, 2*dly*, Seeing we are ſet apart to God, with a deſign that we ſhould lead holy and pious lives, therefore by ſanctification is often ſignified a holy and righteous converſation; and Chriſt may be ſaid to be *made to us ſanctification*, as he leads us to the practice of holineſs and righteouſneſs, which he does by his word and by his ſpirit. And the goſpel of Chriſt leads us to holineſs, as therein his pure and holy example is propoſed to us, holy precepts and commands are enjoined us, holy exhortations, admonitions and inſtructions are given us, the threatenings of it deter us from a vicious practice, and all manner of encouragement to a holy converſation are therein ſet before us; and our Saviour ſanctifies us by his ſpirit, in that he ſends it to us, to diſpoſe us to piety, and to aſſiſt us in the practice of holineſs; to influence and purify our minds, and to excite us to the ſincere performance of every duty. Thus is Chriſt *made to us ſanctification.*

SERM. XIII.

4*thly*,

SERM. XIII.

4*thly*, The last benefit mentioned by the apostle which we have by Christ under the gospel, is redemption; he is *made to us redemption*. Now, Christ is our Redeemer, in delivering us, 1. From a sinful state. 2. From a state of misery and death, the consequence and desert of sin.—1*st*, Jesus Christ delivers men from a sinful state. This I have already spoke something to under the head of sanctification; and it is what the apostle expresses, *Tit.* ii. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.* Thus the apostle *Peter* speaks of being *redeemed from a vain conversation*, 1st Epist. i. 18. Redemption in this sense, *viz.* from a sinful state, is certainly true of all us sincere christians, but is most eminently seen in the deliverance of those who first embraced christianity, especially the *Gentiles*, from their sinful course; for the *Gentiles* were dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world; but Christ delivered them from the present evil world, *viz.* from the wicked customs and corrupt manners of the world, and from all ungodly commerce with it, and so redeemed them from their vain conversation. This also implies deliverance from the power and dominion of satan. They were before led captive by him at his will, but were now recovered out of his snare, and by the faith of Christ had overcome him. 2*dly*, Christ

Christ redeems us from misery and death, the consequence and desert of sin. This redemption is not indeed accomplished in this world, but will be in that which is to come. Sin has subjected us to many calamities and afflictions, and even to death itself; but they who sincerely believe in Christ, and obey the gospel, tho' they die, shall not die for ever, death will not hold them always, but whilst the wicked rise again to be condemned to the second death, they will rise again in glory to a happy immortality; when *death shall be swallowed up in victory*, and they shall say, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* This is what the apostle means, when he says, *We groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body*, Rom. viii. 23. when the saints shall be perfectly delivered from all the calamities, miseries, afflictions and inconveniencies of this mortal state, and shall be entirely happy in the fruition of the heavenly glory for ever. SERM. XIII.

Thus have I briefly shewn how Christ was made to those, with other christians, *wisdom*, in opposition to the wisdom of the world, which the false apostle made so much of; *righteousness*, in opposition to the righteousness which is of the law, which the *Jews* vainly sought to be justified by; *sanctification*, in opposition again to the *Jews*, who thought they were to continue the people of God on the old foundation, *viz.* the obser-

Serm. XIII. vance of *Moſes*'s law, and that the *Gentiles* could not be the people of God, without ſubmitting to this law, (for, as it ſeems, this falſe apoſtle was a *Jew.)* And, *laſtly*, *redemption*, in delivering them from a ſtate of ſin and death; whereas the redemption or deliverance of the *Jews* was a temporal and worldly redemption.

Let us now make a few reflections on what has been ſaid, and ſo conclude.

1. Hereby we may ſee the excellency of the goſpel, or of the chriſtian religion. For theſe ineſtimable bleſſings we have been treating of, are all conveyed to us by the goſpel. The goſpel of Chriſt furniſhes us with excellent, ſolid and uſeful knowledge, with the beſt diſcoveries, with the trueſt wiſdom; is able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation; it brings us to a righteouſneſs of God's appointment, whereby we may be juſtified; by it we have the privilege of becoming God's people, and are made partakers of eternal redemption; and what greater bleſſings can there be than theſe?

2. Let us glory in God only. This is certainly moſt reaſonable, for it is of him that we are in Chriſt, and it is of him that Chriſt is made all this to us. Let us not therefore be like ſome among theſe *Corinthians*, who were apt to glory in men: This advice the apoſtle gives, *Cor.* iii. 21. *Therefore let no man glory in men; but let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord.* Cor. i. 31. *Let us glory in*

in God, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the attonement; and let us give thanks to God, and bless and praise his name, for this his wonderful grace. SERM. XIII.

3. To conclude, hereby we see what kind of life is required of us. Doubtless we ought to lead a life agreeable to that dispensation by which we receive so great blessings: And as 'tis plain, from the blessings we have been treating of, that nothing but holiness and righteousness is agreeable to the gospel, so we ought to live a holy and pious life. Let us therefore act agreeable to the wisdom that our blessed Saviour teaches, and do whatsoever God commands. As God is pleased to justify us by his grace, let us not be so ungrateful and wicked as to continue in sin, but let us make it our business to follow after righteousness. As we are the people of God by faith in Christ, let us walk agreeable to this character; let us be *holy in all manner of conversation*. And, *finally*, as we are redeemed by the blood of Christ, let us take care that we return not to a sinful course; but let us persevere in the faith of Christ, and maintain a holy life, that so we may escape the punishment of the wicked, and may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

SERMON XIV.

CHRIST the Light of the World.

JOHN viii. 12.

Then ſpake Jeſus again unto them, ſaying, I am the light of the world: He that followeth me, ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life.

SERM. XIV.

OUR bleſſed Saviour was now at *Jeruſalem*, it being the feaſt of tabernacles. We read of his going thither out of *Galilee*, in the 10th verſe of the preceeding chapter; *But when his brethren were gone up, then went he alſo up unto the feaſt, not openly, but as it were in ſecret.* But tho' he went up thus privately, it was not long before he diſcovered himſelf in carrying on that great work he came into the world about, *viz.* teaching and inſtructing mankind; for, *ver.* 14. it is ſaid, *Now about the midſt of the feaſt, Jeſus went up into the temple, and taught.* This enraged the prieſts and phariſees, as it always did, they being unwilling to have the people

people brought off from that superstition which produced so much gain to them, and so they sent officers to take him; notwithstanding which, in the last day, that great day of the feast, so called because of the great solemnity of it, it being the custom for the *Jews* then to compass the altar seven times with branches in their hands, and with great pomp, to bring water from the fountain of *Siloah* into the temple, singing these words of the prophet *Isaiah*, *With joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation.* On that day, Jesus taking occasion from this ceremony, *stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* The Evangelist, in the following verse, *ver.* 39. informs us, *that he spake thus of the spirit, which they that believed on him should receive*; *for the Holy Ghost*, says he, *i. e.* the extraordinary effusion of it, *was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.* Our Saviour continuing thus to teach till night drew on, retired then to the mount of *Olives*; *And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him*; *and he sat down and taught them again*; as in the 1st and 2d verses of this 8th chapter. But the scribes and pharisees, who always studied to interrupt him in this divine work, and to draw him into snares, that they might

SERM. XIV.

SERM. XIV.

have whereof to accuſe him, and render him unacceptable to the people, whoſe ſalvation he was endeavouring to promote, whilſt he was thus intent upon inſtructing thoſe that came about him, brought to him a woman taken in adultery, and telling him, that *Moſes* in the law commanded them that ſuch ſhould be ſtoned, aſked him, What he ſaid to it? *This they ſaid*, ſays the Evangeliſt, *tempting him, that they might have to accuſe him.* But he behaved himſelf in ſuch a manner, as that he ſoon ſham'd and got rid of thoſe troubleſome and ill-deſigning men. And having got over this interruption, he fell again to his work of teaching the people, as we are informed in our text. *Then ſpake Jeſus again unto them, ſaying, I am the light of the world; he that followeth me, ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life.*

Our Saviour is often ſpoken of under the character of *light*, eſpecially in this goſpel of St. *John*. Thus, *chap.* i. 9. *That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*; or, *which coming into the world lighteth every man. That was the true light*, i. e. Chriſt was the light by way of eminence, in the higheſt and moſt excellent ſenſe; otherwiſe, *John the Baptiſt* is called *a burning, and a ſhining light*; and our Saviour tells his diſciples, *they are the light of the world.* But the light which *John the Baptiſt* communicated to men by his preaching,

ing, was far inferior to that which our Lord's discourses and doctrine imported, and the apostles received all the light they imparted to the world from Christ himself: So that he was the *true light*, as being so in an eminent and exalted sense. And thus our Saviour speaks of himself, *chap.* ix. 5. *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.* And, *chap.* xii. 46. very agreeable to the words of our text, *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me, should not abide in darkness.* And truly it is with the highest reason he assumes this character to himself, if we consider his most excellent doctrine, and perfect example, whereby men have their understandings enlightened, have every thing that is necessary for them to know, set in its true light, and are directed how to act, in order to the obtaining the most valuable end, which his gospel also sets before them. SERM. XIV.

Let us therefore, according to the words of our text,

I. Consider more particularly in what respects Christ is the light of the world: *I am the light of the world.*

II. The benefit and advantage accruing to his sincere followers thereby: *He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

SERM. XIV.

I. In what reſpects is Chriſt the light of the world? God ſent him into the world for that purpoſe, and how did he anſwer the deſign of his miſſion?

1ſt, Jeſus Chriſt is truly the light of the world, in that he hath plainly diſcovered and declared to men how they, being ſinners, and under the diſpleaſure of God, may be delivered out of that unhappy ſtate, and reſtored to the divine favour and acceptance. This is a thing of the utmoſt importance for us to know, as the ſenſe of the divine diſpleaſure carries in it the greateſt miſery, and the favour, acceptance, and approbation of our Maker ſuppoſes the higheſt happineſs. *In his favour is life, and his loving-kindneſs is better than life*; and without his favour we can never be happy, but muſt be in a moſt dreadful and miſerable condition. Therefore nothing is more neceſſary, nothing can be more grateful and pleaſing to us, if we have a right judgment and apprehenſion of things, than to know, and be thoroughly aſſured how we may regain the divine favour and acceptance, which we have forfeited by our ſins. If men indeed had never ſinned, they would never have reaſon to doubt of the divine favour, but might be certain, ſo long as they did nothing but what was well-pleaſing to God, that he would continue favourable and propitious to them; but as they *have all ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God*, the way

way of being reſtored to his favour is not of itſelf ſo plain and certain, as to admit of no doubt or queſtion. It is certain that, in ſuch a caſe, the light of nature would ſuggeſt the moſt probable way of being reſtored to the divine acceptance would be by repentance and a ſincere reformation: But that the light of nature was not altogether ſatisfactory upon this point, may poſſibly be concluded from the various ſacrifices and ceremonies among the heathen, whereby they endeavoured to appeaſe their offended deities. Beſides, a perſon may have ſome reaſon to ſay with himſelf, How do I know whether it be conſiſtent with the honour of God, which, as lawgiver and governor of the world he is concerned to preſerve, with the ends of his moſt wiſe government, and the good of the various orders of beings under him, to pardon my wilful and repeated breach of his laws, tho' upon the moſt ſincere repentance? I am indeed perſuaded, that his nature is kind and good; but how can I be perfectly aſſured, without all doubt or ſcruple, that it is conſiſtent with his other perfections, particularly the relation he ſtands in to his creatures, as lawgiver and governour, to accept of my repentance? And if it be not conſiſtent with all his perfections, it is conſiſtent with none, foraſmuch as they all perfectly harmonize. Now Jeſus Chriſt, in the goſpel, has ſufficiently delivered us from all doubts of this

SERM. XIV.

SERM. XIV.

nature; for therein we are plainly taught, that repentance is the ſure way of being reſtored to the divine favour, and having our ſins forgiven, are hereupon called, encouraged and excited to repentance, and informed wherein it truly conſiſts, and are fully aſſured that God will accept of it, not abſolutely, but upon the account of the death and ſacrifice of his own dear Son, who died for our ſins, and gave his life a ranſom for us; ſo that, as none can be pardoned and ſaved without repentance, ſo neither are we pardoned and ſaved wholly upon the account of it, but with regard had to Jeſus Chriſt, who is *the propitiation for our ſins:* And accordingly it was ordered in the divine wiſdom, that repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached *in his name* among all nations. And this method of forgiveneſs, and being reſtored to the divine favour and acceptance, which is declared in the goſpel of Chriſt, does moſt effectually exclude all doubts and ſcruples about the certainty of ſuch forgiveneſs and acceptance; ſince hereby the honour of God, as governour of the world, is as well preſerved, and his laws as effectually ſecured from contempt, and the ends of the divine government as well anſwered, as if the offenders themſelves had ſuffered the puniſhment of their own tranſgreſſions. Thus then Jeſus Chriſt is truly *the light of the world*, inaſmuch as he has diſcovered and declared

declared to sinful men, in the gospel, the certain way of their being restored to so desirable and necessary a blessing as the divine favour, acceptance and approbation; and has afforded to us therein all suitable means, advantages and assistances, in order to our repentance and reconciliation with God. SERM. XIV.

2*dly*, Jesus Christ is *the light of the world*, in declaring to us the whole will of God, with respect to our duty, delivering to us such excellent rules and directions for our whole conduct, and shewing us how to behave and act in every respect, in every capacity, relation and condition. The light of nature might, indeed, have instructed men in the several parts of their duty, and God gave them their reason for that purpose; and yet it must be acknowledged, that our reason is very liable to be perverted, and the light of nature very much obscured, through passion or prejudice, through a course of vice, the prevalency of bad custom, or the strength of evil habits. And this was truly the case of almost all mankind, before the glorious gospel of Christ appeared amongst them. And as to any particular revelations that God before made to any part of mankind, they were very imperfect and deficient in this respect, and came vastly short of that real piety, true righteousness and universal goodness, that is recommended, in the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles. In the gospel, we

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SERM. XIV.

are perfectly taught how we ought to walk and to please God; by this most excellent revelation we are thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Jesus Christ has declared to us every thing, that becomes us as rational creatures, all the duties we owe to God, ourselves, and our neighbours, has *taught us to live soberly, righteously and godly in the world*; to be good and kind, and merciful, and charitable; has set all the parts of virtue, all the duties of morality in their proper light, and recommended them with the utmost advantage. By his gospel we may plainly see every thing that ought to be avoided by us, what is displeasing to God, and unbecoming our rational make; and therein, every thing that is agreeable to the divine will, to the dictates of right reason, and to the several relations we stand in, is plainly and clearly expressed, and after the most suitable manner enforced and recommended. And our Saviour is the light of the world in this respect, not only by his heavenly and divine doctrine, but by his pure and spotless example, which was perfectly free from all vice and disorder, and in which the highest piety, the greatest goodness, and all the parts of the most consummate virtue, did most plainly and conspicuously appear.

3*dly*, Jesus Christ is *the light of the world*, inasmuch as he has revealed to them the glorious reward of eternal life, to be bestowed

ed on all thoſe who ſincerely love and obey God. A future ſtate, in general, may very probably be concluded from reaſon, though not certainly known; but the nature, manner and duration of this ſtate, were much more uncertain. Hence though the heathen had ſome notion of ſuch a ſtate, yet they were generally very wild in their conceits about it, and had very groſs apprehenſions concerning it. And the notices of a life to come, in the old Teſtament, are very rare and obſcure. But the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt is full of the promiſes and aſſurances of it, plainly declares, that it will be everlaſting, and, in great meaſure, informs us of the nature and manner of it, and the means of bringing it about, namely, by a reſurrection, which is one of the principal articles of the doctrine of Chriſt, and very much inſiſted on through the whole goſpel. Thus our Lord Jeſus Chriſt has *brought life and immortality to light through the goſpel*, 2 Tim. i. 10. And to encourage us to repent, and perſiſt in a holy and righteous converſation, he has given to us the exceeding great and precious promiſes of eternal glory and never-ending felicity. He has told us, *That the righteous ſhall enter into life eternal, ſhall come forth out of their graves, unto the reſurrection of life, ſhall ſhine as the ſun in the kingdom of their father*, and ſhall poſſeſs the glories and joys, and delights of heaven for ever. SERM. XIV.

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SERM. XIV.

His gospel informs us, of *an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, and fadeth not away*, which is reserved in heaven for his sincere followers, and that they *who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality*, shall receive the reward of everlasting life, and obtain eternal glory, honour and peace. In this blissful state, the holy scriptures acquaint us, we shall enjoy the continued favour and glorious presence of the Almighty; shall be with Christ, where he is, and shall behold his glory; shall see him as he is, and be like unto him, in happiness, in immortality, and in glory, having our vile bodies changed and made like unto his glorious body. And this glorious and everlasting state is not only promised and expressly declared in the gospel by Christ and his apostles, but he has given us the utmost assurance of it in his own most glorious resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven; blessed therefore, for ever *blessed, be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.* Thus have we seen how and in what respects Christ is the light of the world. And come now,

II. To

II. To consider the great benefit and advantage accruing to his sincere followers thereby. The things wherein Christ is a light to the world, as they have been considered by us, are certainly most useful and advantageous; they therefore, who sincerely follow him, must find the benefit and advantage of them. The advantage that they receive from Christ's being the light of the world, is expressed in these words; *He that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* To follow Christ here, must certainly signify more than a bare local following of him; for many who so followed him, did it more out of regard to their bellies, than to any thing else, because they eat of the loaves and were filled, as we read, *John* vi. 26. But he who follows Christ here, is such an one as has a sincere regard to what Christ, who is the light of the world, teaches; who believes in him and obeys his doctrine, is one of his sheep, one of his sincere disciples. Now such an one as this, *shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* Darkness, as it is used metaphorically, has several significations in scripture. It sometimes signifies great affliction, distress and perplexity, as light is used for comfort and a prosperous state of affairs, *Isai.* l. 10. *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust*

SERM. XIV.

SERM. XIV. *in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.* And, *Lam.* iii. 1, 2. *I am the man that hath ſeen affliction by the rod of his wrath: He hath led me and brought me into darkneſs, but not into light.* Now though thoſe who follow Chriſt, are not exempted from outward afflictions and calamities, yet upon the divine and heavenly precepts of the goſpel, they may very well ſurmount all anxiety, trouble and perplexity of mind, and may enjoy comfort, peace and ſatisfaction in the midſt of their worldly troubles, *Joh.* xvi. 33. *Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you,* ſays our bleſſed Saviour to his diſciples, *that in me ye might have peace; in the world ye ſhall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.* Darkneſs is alſo frequently uſed for a ſtate of ignorance; and certainly they who follow Chriſt as they ought, who come to the light which ſhines in his word, and attend to ſo heavenly and divine an inſtructor, cannot be ignorant of any thing that is either neceſſary or proper for them to know. Though they were ſometimes darkneſs, they are now light in the Lord. They cannot be ignorant of their duty, nor of the terms of the divine acceptance, nor of the rewards of the future life, which are neceſſary to carry them on in the way of righteouſneſs and obedience. But, in the laſt place, darkneſs is very often uſed for ſin and vice, practiſed in a ſtate of ignorance, and walking in darkneſs,

darkneſs, moſt commonly ſignifies following and living in ſuch ſinful and vicious practices. Thus, 1 *John* i. 6. *If we ſay that we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie, and do not the truth.* It follows, *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowſhip one with another, and the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son, cleanſeth us from all ſin.* So in *Prov.* ii. 13, 14, 15. *Who leave the paths of uprightneſs, to walk in the ways of darkneſs; who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardneſs of the wicked; whoſe ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths.* Accordingly, when our Saviour ſays, *he that followeth me, ſhall not walk in darkneſs*, his meaning ſeems to be, he that has a due regard to my doctrine, ſhall not live in the practice of vice, ſhall not follow ſinful and unlawful courſes. Chriſt's doctrine is quite contrary to ſuch things; conſequently, they who adhere to it, will eſcape them, and whilſt they continue to adhere to it, will not be overcome by them. Our Saviour adds, *but ſhall have the light of life; he that followeth me ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life.* Agreeable to this phraſe, St. *John* ſays, chap. i. 4. *In him was life, and the life was the light of men*; whereby they had the knowledge of this life eternal, and were directed in the way that leads to it. Now they who follow Chriſt, *ſhall have the light of life, i. e.* 1*ſt*, While they faithfully adhere to, and obey

SERM. XIV.

SERM. XIV.

obey his doctrine, they shall safely go on in the way that leads to life; and, *2dly*, They who follow Christ *shall have the light of life*, *i. e.* have the comfortable and delightful hopes and prospect of this blessed and glorious life. They shall be able to rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and may know that when their *earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, they have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*; and that *when Christ, who is their life shall appear, they shall then also appear with with him in glory*. They who obey Christ may be certain, that they shall be glorified with him; and being like him in holiness here, that they shall be like him in an immortal life, in never-ending glory and felicity in the world to come, when they shall see him as he is, and behold his glory. Thus Christ being the light of the world, they that follow him, who obey his doctrine, and conform to his example, *shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*.

Let us now conclude with a reflection or two on what has been said.

1. Hereby we see the excellency of the gospel, or of the christian dispensation, which has so excellent a teacher and instructor for its author, and is attended with so good and happy effects. Light we know, is one of the chief blessings and comforts of life; but the light of the mind is far more valuable

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and excellent than that of the body, as the mind is more excellent than the body: But this ſpiritual light, this light of the mind, is imparted to us through the goſpel, is communicated to us from Chriſt, the light of the world, from his heavenly doctrine and divine example. As light is moſt pleaſant, ſo darkneſs is a moſt uncomfortable and melancholy thing; but bodily darkneſs is nothing to the darkneſs of the mind, the darkneſs of ignorance and vice; and from this moſt unhappy ſtate are we delivered by the glorious goſpel of Chriſt. There is ſuch an excellent light diffuſed through the whole of it, that they who heartily embrace it, and give themſelves up to the direction of it, and ſo are the diſciples and followers of Chriſt, *ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life.* Jeſus Chriſt in the goſpel, has called us to repentance, has laid down the moſt excellent rules and directions for a holy, righteous and pious life, and given us the higheſt encouragements thereunto: And thus he has ſhewn us, how we, who are ſinful creatures, may, through him, be reſtored to the favour of God, and how we may continue in his favour; and has moſt fully declared, that God's favour, to the righteous, is not confined to this world, but will be enjoyed by them in an ever-

SERM. XIV.

SERM. XIV.

lasting state, which will make them everlastingly happy. How excellent then, how glorious a dispensation must that of the gospel be, which reveals and discovers such excellent things to us? Let us, therefore, bless God, who in granting us the gospel, has blessed us with all spiritual blessings, who has called us out of darkness into this his marvellous light; who has vouchsafed to speak to us by his Son, and by him to make known to us the riches of his grace, his good and acceptable, and perfect will, and whatever is necessary to bring us to the enjoyment of eternal life, glory, and felicity.

2. Having this glorious light of the gospel by Jesus Christ, *Let us walk as children of light.* The greater the light is which we enjoy, the greater will our condemnation be, if we act not agreeable to it. If, whilst the light of the gospel shines upon us, we continue to walk in the ways of darkness, and being captivated by vicious habits, *love darkness rather than light*, and do not turn from it, by a hearty repentance, our case will be much worse than if we had never enjoyed the gospel. *This is the condemnation*, says our blessed Saviour, *that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that*

doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doth the truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God, according to his mind and will, *John* iii. 19, 20, 21. Let us therefore, above all, endeavour to purge our hearts from the love of vice; this we must of necessity do, if we would receive any advantage from the glorious revelation of the gospel. And this being done, let us always have recourse to this light, that we may direct all our actions by it. Let *us not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind, that we may prove what is that good and perfect, and acceptable will of God*; and, being satisfied what this will is, let us heartily comply with it, casting off all the works of darkness, and putting on the armour of light. Let us follow Christ as his sheep, and faithfully adhere to his holy gospel, and then we shall not walk in the ways of darkness, but obeying his doctrine, and walking as he walked, *shall have the light of life*, the glorious prospect of life eternal, and of happiness that will never end; and, finally, shall, at last, be secured from that state of everlasting darkness, death, and perdition, which shall be the portion of all impenitent sinners, and shall be eter-

SERM. XIV.

SERM. XIV.

nally happy in a kingdom of perfect light and glory.

Christian holiness is the sure way to happiness, and the promise of eternal life and glory is annexed to sincere piety and righteousness; and Christ's doctrine teaching and recommending this holiness, piety and righteousness, they who obey it, and adhere to it, *i. e.* who follow him, do certainly *walk in the way that leadeth to life.*

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SERMON XV.

Salvation wrought by the Grace of GOD.

TITUS, ii. 11, 12.

For the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and wordly luſts; we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.

THE main deſign of the goſpel, or chriſtian diſpenſation, is to promote holineſs and righteouſneſs, to recommend and enforce true practical religion, and to reduce men to obedience to God, and the exerciſe of their duty in every reſpect. Hence, as the goſpel reveals the moſt wonderful and ſtupendous grace and goodneſs of the divine Being towards us, his unworthy creatures; ſo, at the ſame time, it calls us to the ſerious conſideration and ſincere practice of our duty, according to every condition and circumſtance,

SERM. XV.

SERM. XV.

and the ſeveral relations we ſtand in; and contains all the rules of a holy life and converſation. All the moſt excellent benefits of it are offered to us, and are to be enjoyed by us, only as we believe, and repent, and turn to God, and ſincerely comply with his will. The grace and mercy of God, diſplayed in this wonderful diſpenſation, is propoſed to us with a view to encourage us to a holy life; and is made uſe of, in the goſpel, as a moſt powerful and forceable argument and motive to ſuch a converſation. This is the Tenure of the whole new Teſtament, and it is with this view that the words of our text in particular are introduced; as may be ſeen if we conſider the foregoing verſes. In the firſt chapter the apoſtle had given *Titus* an account of the evil converſation, and corrupt doctrine of ſome falſe teachers, who exceedingly troubled the churches of the *Cretans*, among whom he was left by the apoſtle, that he might ſet in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city: And in the following chapter he directs *Titus* how to teach and act, in oppoſition to theſe falſe teachers. In the firſt verſe he gives him a general exhortation, *But ſpeak you the things which become ſound doctrine*; and in the following verſes he explains it, by applying it to the ſeveral ages and conditions of men, and ſhews what he means by *the things which become ſound doctrine: That the aged*

aged men be ſober, grave, temperate, ſound in faith, or in the faithful diſcharge of their duty, *in charity, in patience. The aged women likewiſe, that they be in behaviour as becometh holineſs, not falſe accuſers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be ſober, to love their huſbands, to love their children, to be diſcreet, chaſte, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own huſbands, that the word of God be not blaſphemed. Young men likewiſe exhort to be ſober-minded. In all things ſhewing thyſelf a pattern of good works; in doctrine ſhewing uncorruptneſs, gravity, ſincerity, ſound ſpeech*, or good wholſome diſcourſes, tending to promote true piety and virtue, *that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary ſpirit may be aſhamed, having no evil thing to ſay of you.* Then he returns, *Exhort ſervants to be obedient to their own maſters, and to pleaſe them well in all things; not anſwering again, not purloining, but ſhewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things:* Which laſt words, *that they may adorn*, &c. or among all men, tho' they refer more immediately to the ſervants ſpoken of juſt before, yet they may be underſtood to refer to all thoſe whoſe duties the apoſtle had likewiſe reckoned up. And then, as a moſt forcible argument, for the ſincere practice of theſe and all other duties, he adds, in the words of the text, *For*

SERM. XV.

SERM. XV. *the grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us*, us christians, or believers in Christ, *that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.*

In treating on which words, I shall consider,

I. What we are to understand by this *grace of God.*

II. The character that is here given of it, it *bringeth salvation.*

III. Its appearance.

IV. How it *appeared to all men.*

V. What it teaches.

VI. How this appearance of the grace of God is an argument for our leading a holy and righteous life.

VII. The happy consequence of our leading such a life, according to the gospel; we may then *look for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

I. What are we to understand in this place by the grace of God? The grace of God signifies his favour, love and mercy, his kind affection and good-will; and by it here, we are to understand, either that grace and favour of God which is discovered in the gospel, or, which comes to the same thing, the gospel itself which reveals it.

1. If

1. If we are to take the grace of God here in a proper ſenſe, we are to underſtand by it that grace and favour in particular which he has diſplayed in the goſpel, his grace in Chriſt Jeſus, that kind affection and good-will in the divine Being towards men which the goſpel reveals. The favour of God is indeed ſhewn to us, and to all his creatures in ſeveral reſpects; his kindneſs and good-will towards us, is clearly ſeen in the good things of this life, which by his bounty we partake of, and in all the bleſſings of his providence: But his love, and mercy, and kindneſs, which is diſplayed to us in the goſpel thro' Chriſt Jeſus, ſurpaſſes all the reſt, is the greateſt and moſt wonderful; and therefore may be, as it often is, by way of eminence called, *the grace of God*, or the *favour of God*. But, SERM. XV.

2. The grace of God in this place may, by a very eaſy *metonymy*, ſignify the goſpel, in which this wonderful grace and favour is revealed; that gracious diſpenſation which Chriſt, by the appointment of his Father, is the author of. And in this ſenſe we may underſtand it, not only of that part of the goſpel which preciſely reveals the grace and favour of God, but of the whole complex and conſtitution of the goſpel, as, together with the revelation of this grace, the manner of its conveyance, and the conditions to be performed on our part, in order to receive benefit by it, and the like. All this together

SERM. XV.

together may very well be called *the grace of God*; for this whole diſpenſation is founded in his grace, has its riſe from it, and is the effect of it. It is purely of the divine grace that, upon our believing, and repenting, we may partake of the bleſſings of the goſpel, and may have a ſhare in the benefits of the divine favour. Thus then, by *the grace of God* in this place, I rather think we are to underſtand the whole diſpenſation of the goſpel, which is the effect of the greateſt grace and favour. Thus the goſpel is called in other places, particularly, 2 *Cor.* vi. 1. *We then as workers together with him, beſeech you alſo, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain*; i. e. that ye receive not the goſpel in vain; which they do who perſiſt not in the belief and profeſſion of it, or do not conform to what it requires. So, *Heb.* xii. 15. *Looking diligently, leſt any man fail of*, or fall from, *the grace of God*, i. e. from the goſpel. Thus alſo it is called *the word of his grace*; as, *Acts* xx. 32. *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace.* It is ſometimes called *grace* abſolutely; as, *John* i. 17. *For the law was given by* Moſes, *but grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt*, i. e. the goſpel, as appears by its being put in contradiſtinction to the law, and by the word *truth*, the goſpel being alſo frequently called *the truth.* It is alſo called *the grace of Chriſt*; as, *Gal.* i. 6. *I marvel that you are ſo ſoon removed*

moved from him that called you to the grace of Chriſt, unto another goſpel. So then, by *the grace of God* in our text, we are to underſtand the goſpel, or the covenant of grace in Chriſt, which is called *the grace of God*, upon the account of his wonderful favour therein diſplayed. SERM. XV.

II. We are next to conſider the character that is here given of this grace of God, or the goſpel, *it bringeth ſalvation*; *the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation*, ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ σωτήριος, the ſalutary, or ſalutiferous grace of God. The grace and favour of God revealed in the goſpel very well deſerves this title, foraſmuch as that grace tends to our ſalvation, and is ſhewn in ſaving us. And the goſpel itſelf may well be called ſalutiferous, foraſmuch as it reveals and offers to us, and brings with it, to them that embrace it, even the greateſt deliverance and ſalvation. Thus the goſpel is called *the word of ſalvation*, Acts xiii. 26. *To you is the word of this ſalvation ſent*; *the goſpel of ſalvation*, Eph. i. 13. *After that ye heard the word of truth, the goſpel of your ſalvation*; and is ſaid to be *the power of God unto ſalvation*, Rom. i. 16. It is alſo ſometimes called *ſalvation*; thus, by this word we are to underſtand the goſpel, *Acts* xxviii. 28. *Be it known therefore unto you, that the ſalvation of God is ſent unto the* Gentiles, *and that they will hear it.* And, *Heb.* ii. 3. *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great*

SERM. XV. *great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that hear him?* i. e. if we neglect the gospel which brings so great salvation. Now the salvation which the gospel brings will appear to be most excellent and great, if we consider that it consists in a deliverance from a sinful state, and from a state of misery and death, the consequence and desert of sin, and in our being raised to eternal life, and a state of everlasting felicity in heaven.

1. The gospel delivers men from a sinful state, from the power and dominion of sin; it turns them from a sinful course, from the practice of impiety and unrighteousness, and reduces them to a holy and righteous conversation, and gives them the privilege of becoming the people of God. From the time that sin entered into the world, by the disobedience of our first parents, it continually increased and got ground, and at length so prevailed, that the generality of mankind had forsaken the true God, and given themselves up to idolatry, and all manner of vicious and abominable practices; they had abandoned truth, and righteousness, and goodness, and by fulfilling their unlawful desires, and following their depraved inclinations, were sunk far below the dignity of their nature, and had contracted habits very unbecoming beings of such a make and constitution. But the design of the gospel was to reform sinful men,

men, to deliver them from the power and prevalency of vice and idolatry, and to make them the ſincere worſhippers and ſervants of God. *The Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil*; that he might reclaim men from a courſe of vice, and a life of impiety, to the obedience they owe to God, and the practice of piety and holineſs; he came to teach us our duty, and to enforce it by all ſuitable motives, to lead men to repentance, and to turn from their iniquities, from idolatry and ſuperſtition, to the worſhip of God, and from ſin to the practice of righteouſneſs. And as it was the deſign of the goſpel thus to ſave men, by turning them from their ſins, ſo this was the happy effect of it amongſt thoſe who ſincerely embraced it, and put themſelves under its purifying influence; for ſuch perſons, of idolaters, became worſhippers of the true God, of wicked and unholy, became holy and righteous: The *Gentiles* who believed, tho' they *were ſometime darkneſs*, were *now light in the Lord*; were *turned from darkneſs unto light, and from the power of ſatan unto God*; were delivered from the power of darkneſs, from their idolatrous ſtate, and were tranſlated into the kingdom of Chriſt; and they who were fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures, and lived in all manner of abominable practices, when the goſpel came to them, and they put themſelves

SERM. XV.

SERM. XV. selves under it, by a hearty reception of it, became, as it were, new creatures, casting off those works of darkness, and returning from the practice of sin to a holy and righteous conversation. The deliverance of the *Gentiles*, from their heathen state of idolatry and apostacy from God, and their being brought back into his kingdom, under the gospel, which is called *their salvation*, is expressed in a very sublime and lofty manner by the apostle, in his epistle to the *Ephesians*, chap. i. 19, 20. *And* (that ye may know) *what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he worked in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right-hand in the heavenly places.* He goes on in the 2d chap. *And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, or lived in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others*, i. e. as other *Gentiles: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised*

raiſed us up together, and made us ſit together in heavenly places, or in the kingdom of God, *in*, or thro', *Chriſt Jeſus*. Thus the *Gentiles* were at firſt ſaved by the goſpel, were delivered from their ſinful ſtate, and made alive unto God; and thoſe of the *Jews*, who believed, were thus ſaved, being turned from their iniquities: And even now, all who ſincerely embrace the goſpel, are enabled to eſcape the pollutions of the world, and to live holy, righteous, and pious lives. Thus then, the goſpel brings ſalvation from ſin, or deliverance from its power and dominion; it turns men from ſin unto God. But, SERM. XV.

2. The ſalvation which the goſpel brings, conſiſts in the remiſſion of ſins, and deliverance from miſery and death. As thoſe who embrace the goſpel are delivered from a ſinful ſtate, ſo they have all their ſins forgiven, their tranſgreſſions pardoned, and their manifold offences againſt God remitted and paſs'd by. Nothing is more plainly revealed, or more expreſsly promiſed in the goſpel, than the forgiveneſs of ſins to all that repent and believe in Chriſt; and this benefit, this unſpeakable favour, is declared to be given thro' Chriſt, for his ſake, and on the account of his death, and the ſhedding of his blood: He is *the Lamb of God that taketh away the ſin of the world*; *he was delivered for our offences, he gave himſelf for our ſins, and was made ſin*, or a ſin-offering, *for us*; and it is thro'

SERM. XV. thro' him that the remiſſion of ſins is offered to us in the goſpel. *By him all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which* the Jews *could not be juſtified by the law of* Moſes: And *in him we have redemption thro' his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins.* And then, as by the goſpel men receive the remiſſion of ſins, ſo of conſequence they are freed from the puniſhment of them, from miſery and death, and all the diſmal effects of their tranſgreſſions. As all men have ſinned, ſo they have deſerved death, and made themſelves liable to miſery and puniſhment, as the juſt reward of their crimes and offences againſt God: But the goſpel brings ſalvation and deliverance from all this evil; Chriſt *gave himſelf that he might redeem us from all iniquity*, i. e. from the puniſhment of all our iniquities; he redeemed the *Jews* from the curſe of the law, and reſcued the *Gentiles*, as many of them as believed, from the demerits of their crimes. The goſpel brings eternal redemption to all ſincere, penitent believers, ſo that tho' they die the temporal death, they ſhall not die the ſecond, *i. e.* the eternal death; they ſhall not periſh, but ſhall be delivered from everlaſting deſtruction, from the wrath to come, and from all that evil and miſery that their ſins have juſtly deſerved.

3. The goſpel brings ſalvation in that, by it, we have the promiſe of eternal life, and a bleſſed and glorious immortality in the world

to

to come. As all men have ſinned, ſo they have come ſhort of the glory of God; but the goſpel reſtores men to this glory. As by the goſpel we receive the remiſſion of our ſins, ſo by it we are made heirs to an eternal inheritance, an everlaſting kingdom, a crown of life and of glory, that fadeth not away, which we ſhall certainly enjoy, if we live as the goſpel teaches. As thoſe who ſincerely believe and embrace it, and repent of their ſins, are reſtored to the favour of God, and his acceptance and approbation here, ſo, if they perſevere in well-doing, they ſhall be eternally happy in his preſence in the heavenly kingdom. Chriſt *has brought life and immortality to light thro' the goſpel*; and as thoſe who believe in him, ſo as to obey him, are delivered from a ſtate of miſery and death, ſo they ſhall live for ever, and ſhall enjoy eternal happineſs. Eternal life is frequently promiſed in the goſpel, and there are many paſſages in it that denote the perpetual felicity and glory of that ever enduring ſtate. As Chriſt was delivered to death, for our offences, that we might obtain the forgiveneſs of our ſins; ſo he was raiſed again for our juſtification, that we might be aſſured of a reſurrection to everlaſting life, and a happy immortality. By the goſpel, ſincere chriſtians are made the children of God, *and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt*, and ſo ſhall be glorified with him; and ſhall re- SERM. XV.

SERM. XV. ceive an *inheritance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away*; when their natures ſhall be raiſed and perfected, their faculties reſtored, and their bodies glorified, they ſhall have every thing that is truly deſireable and delightful to enjoy; ſhall *ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of their heavenly Father*, and ſhall be for ever compleatly happy in his favour and preſence. Thus we ſee what a ſalutary, or ſalutiferous diſpenſation the goſpel is; it delivers men from the power and dominion of ſin, ſaves them from the condemnation and puniſhment of it, and raiſes them to a ſtate of eternal felicity.

III. We are now to conſider the appearance of this grace of God; *the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared*, ἐπεφάνη, appeared conſpicuouſly and clearly, with luſtre, brightneſs and ſplendor. Now the grace of God appeared,

1. In the appearance and coming of Jeſus Chriſt. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son*, as the effect of his wonderful grace, and to men he ſent him into the world; and as the grace of God was clearly ſeen in the appearance of Chriſt itſelf, ſo, when he came, he, by his preaching, plainly revealed the goſpel of ſalvation: This was the firſt clear diſcovery of the grace of God, upon which all the future diſcoveries of it were founded. The grace of God was diſplayed in all the circumſtances of our

Saviour's appearance, in his coming into the world in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, in his dwelling among men, in his preaching, and in his works, in his ſufferings, death and reſurrection. The love of God to men was ſhewn in a very glorious manner, in ſending ſo high and beloved a perſon, as his only begotten Son, into the world in ſo mean and humble a condition, to converſe with ſuch ſinful and unworthy creatures: The riches of the divine grace were diſcovered in our Saviour's preaching, which preaching was fully confirmed by his miracles and wonderful works. The kindneſs and love of God appeared towards men, in the higheſt manner, in the ſufferings and death of this moſt excellent perſon; *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners Chriſt died for us.* And the truth and certainty of all this is manifeſt in his reſurrection from the dead. Thus we ſee that the grace of God appeared in or by our Saviour's appearance, according to what is ſaid, 2 *Tim.* i. 9, 10. *Who hath ſaved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace, which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus, before the world began; but is now made manifeſt by the appearance of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who hath aboliſhed death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the goſpel.* And, 1 *John* iv. 9. the apoſtle ſays, *In this was*

SERM. XV.

SERM. XV. *manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe God ſent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

2*dly*, The grace of God, or the goſpel, appeared by the preaching of the apoſtles. As the apoſtles preached that *the kingdom of heaven was at hand*, whilſt our Saviour was on earth, ſo after his reſurrection, and aſcenſion, they, according to their commiſſion, preached it as actually come; they preached the goſpel, and faithfully publiſhed every part of it, they neglected not to declare the whole counſel of God; as they had learnt the goſpel from Chriſt, ſo, according to his command, they made it known to others. That any might be acquainted with the goſpel, it was neceſſary that they ſhould hear it, *but how ſhould they hear without a preacher?* Therefore Chriſt ſent forth his apoſtles to preach the goſpel, and the goſpel appeared not only by the preaching of the twelve apoſtles, but alſo very eminently by the preaching of the apoſtle *Paul*, and of multitudes of the firſt chriſtians. See *Tit.* i. 3. *But hath in due times, manifeſted his word through preaching, which is committed unto me, according to the commandment of God our Saviour.*

3*dly*, The grace of God, or the goſpel, appeared by the miracles that accompanied the preaching of it. Thus the goſpel appeared beyond contradiction to be the true

grace

grace of God, for this was an undeniable evidence of its divine original and authority. Men might have talked of the grace of God, and have pretended to a divine commiſſion for the publiſhing of it; but there could be no good proof of this, without the power of miracles. This preaching of a new diſpenſation from God, without miracles, would leave what was preached altogether uncertain, and would be of none or very little effect: But true and real miracles, together with the fitneſs of the doctrine, are an undoubted evidence of a diſpenſation coming from God. Therefore as Chriſt wrought miracles for the confirmation of his miſſion, to declare this grace of God, and the diſciples alſo while he was on earth, ſo when after his reſurrection, he ſent them forth to preach the goſpel, he furniſhed them with a power of doing wonderful works in his name, that their heavenly doctrine might, by this means, have its due influence on the minds of men. And thus the apoſtles, wherever they came and preached, wrought miracles: By which means the grace of God, in the goſpel, and the truth of that diſpenſation, appeared in a moſt glorious and conſpicuous manner, and with ſuch a light, as by none, but wilful ſinners, could be unheeded or diſregarded. Thus we are told, that *the Lord gave teſtimony to the word of his grace, and granted ſigns and*

SERM. XV.

SERM. XV.

wonders to be done by the apoſtles hands, Acts xiv. 3. And the apoſtle *Paul* ſays, *My ſpeech, my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wiſdom, but in demonſtration of the ſpirit of power*, 1 Cor. ii. 4.

4*thly*, The grace of God, or the goſpel, appeared, and does ſtill appear in the writings of the apoſtles and evangeliſts. At the firſt, men received the doctrine of chriſtianity from the mouths of the apoſtles; but even then, as the apoſtles could not be always in all places, for fear their doctrine ſhould be corrupted in their abſence, they committed the goſpel to writing; by which means alſo it was ſtill farther propagated and diſplayed, and thus it is conveyed down to us. We have nothing elſe to have recourſe to, for the doctrine of the goſpel, but thoſe ſacred writings; we have no infallible teacher to conſult, as in the apoſtles times; oral tradition being ſo very uncertain, is juſtly of no force; and there is no need of it, for the ſcriptures contain all things neceſſary for faith and practice. Thus have we conſidered how the grace of God, or the goſpel appeared. We come now,

IV. To conſider how it appeared to all men; *The grace of God which bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men.*

1*ſt*, It appeared to men of all nations, to *Jews* and *Gentiles*. This is agreeable to the antient prophecies: St. *Luke* has theſe words from

from *Isaiah*, *Luke* iii. 6. *And all flesh, i. e.* all men, *shall see the salvation of God.* And St. *Paul*, from the same prophet, has these words, *I have set thee, i. e.* the Messiah, *to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth*, Acts xiii. 47. And, according to these prophecies, Christ sent out his apostles to preach the gospel to all nations; he sent them, indeed, before his resurrection, only to the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*, and commanded them, saying, *Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not.* But after his resurrection, he enlarged their commission, and sent them to all the nations of the *Gentiles*, as well as to the *Jews:* As, *Matt.* xxviii. 19. *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.* Mark xvi. 15. *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*, or to all mankind, *Luke* xxiv. 47. *And that repentance and remission of sins, should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.* And so, *Acts* i. 8. *And ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* And the apostle says, *by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations.* And, accordingly, the apostles executed their commission and preached the

SERM. XV.

SERM. XV. gospel to all nations. Thus we read, *Mark* xvi. ult. *And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.* And the apostle speaking of the preaching of the gospel, says, *Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world, Rom.* x. 18. And in his famous doxology, at the end of this epistle, he expresses himself thus, *Now to him that is of power to stablish you, according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret, since the world begun; but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith.* I shall mention only two places more; in *Col.* i. 6. the apostle, speaking of the gospel, says, *which is come unto you, as it is in all the world.* And *ver.* 23. speaking of the same gospel, has these words, *which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I Paul am made a minister.* Thus we see that the gospel appeared to men of all nations.

2*dly*, The grace of God appeared to all men, so as that wherever it was preached, it was declared to belong to all degrees and conditions of men, and even to every individual that would accept of it. It was declared

clared to belong to all degrees and conditions of men, masters and servants, young and old, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, noble and ignoble; it was preached to all these indifferently, as belonging to them all: No degree or condition of men was excepted: No difference made between them with respect to the offers of the gospel, and the enjoyment of its blessings and privileges, if they did but sincerely embrace it. This is intimated by the apostle, *Col.* iii. 11. *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.* So, *Gal.* iii. 28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* And then it was also declared to belong to every individual that would accept of it; as no condition of men, so no individual was excepted; but in this respect also it was offered indifferently to all. The language of the gospel is, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved; Whosoever believeth on the Son of God, shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life:* So that the gospel excludes none from a share in its privileges, but those who exclude themselves by unbelief, and persisting in a sinful course. Thus we see how *the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared*

SERM. XV. *peared to all men.* I ſhould now come to ſhew, from the following verſe, what this goſpel teaches, but I ſhall leave this to another diſcourſe; and ſhall conclude this, with a word or two of application.

1. Hereby we ſee, that our ſalvation is originally of meer grace. It is the grace of God, that brings the ſalvation we have deſcribed. The goſpel itſelf, the whole diſpenſation of it, is all of grace, and if ſo, the ſalvation promiſed therein muſt be of grace too, and proceeds originally from the free favour of God: We could have merited no ſuch bleſſing at his hands, by any works of ours. Thus the apoſtle ſpeaking of the ſalvation of the firſt chriſtians, eſpecially of the idolatrous *Gentiles*, ſays, *After that the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared; not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us, by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, which he ſhed on us abundantly, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour, that being juſtified by his grace, we ſhould be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*, Tit. iii 4.—7.

2. Let us bleſs and praiſe God for this his wonderful grace. This we have great reaſon to do, if we conſider the wonderful ſalvation it brings to us. The happy effects of this grace are not confined to this life, but extend to the life to come, where, if we abuſe

abuſe it not here, it will put us in the poſ- SERM.
ſeſſion of eternal happineſs. Let us, there- XV.
fore, bleſs God for his kindneſs towards us, in Chriſt Jeſus; let us bleſs him for the gracious diſpenſation of the goſpel, and for the everlaſting conſolation of good hope he has given us through his grace.

3. To conclude. Let us live anſwerable to this grace of God; let us have our converſation as it becomes this holy goſpel. Tho' the goſpel ſalvation is originally of mere grace, yet it is not ſo of grace, as that God will ſave us though we live as we liſt. No, we are required and called upon, *to work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling*, as knowing, that *without holineſs, no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* Let us, therefore, follow after holineſs, and endeavour to abound in all good works. Let us take heed, we turn not the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs, nor abuſe this his kindneſs towards us, which will be to our greater condemnation: But if we would be happy in the world to come, let us be holy in this, let us obey the commands of God, and live as the goſpel teaches; and how that is, I ſhall ſhew more particularly, in my next diſcourſe.

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SERMON XVI.

Salvation wrought by the Grace of God.

TITUS ii. 11, 12.

For the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.

SERM. XVI.

IN treating on theſe words, I propoſed to conſider,

I. What we are to underſtand by this *grace of God.*
II. The character that is here given of it, it *bringeth ſalvation.*
III. Its appearance.
IV. How it *appeared to all men.*
V. What it teaches.
VI. How this appearance of the grace of God is an argument for our leading a holy and righteous life.

The

The four first of these we have already considered. And as to the first we told you, that the grace of God signifies his favour, love, and kind affection towards us; and that by it here we are to understand either, in a proper sense, that grace and favour of God in particular, which he has displayed in the gospel, or, by a *metonymy*, the gospel itself wherein it is revealed, which comes to the same thing. And, if we take it in this sense, it signifies the whole oeconomy and constitution of the gospel. SERM. XVI.

As to the second, I told you, that the grace of God, or the gospel, brings salvation, forasmuch as, 1*st*, It delivers men from a sinful state, from the power, and reign, and pollution of sin; it turns them from a sinful course, from the practice of impiety and unrighteousness, and reduces them to a holy life and conversation. This was most clearly seen in the beginning of the gospel, in turning away many of the *Jews* from their iniquities, and in delivering the *Gentiles* from their idolatrous state, which is called *the power of darkness*, and bringing them to the acknowledgment and worship of the true God, and the practice of holiness and righteousness; and is still seen in the lives and conversations of the sincere professors of the gospel. 2*dly*, It brings salvation, in delivering men from the condemnation and punishment of sin, inasmuch, as by it, we have the remission

SERM. XVI.

remiſſion of ſins, and are ſaved from miſery and death, the conſequence and deſert of our tranſgreſſions. Thus the *Jews* were delivered from the curſe of the law, and the *Gentiles*, from the demerits of their crimes, and all who embrace the goſpel have their ſins forgiven, are delivered from the wrath to come, and ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond death. 3*dly*, The goſpel brings ſalvation, in that by it we have the promiſe of eternal life, and a bleſſed and glorious immortality in the world to come. As all men have ſinned, ſo they have come ſhort of the glory of God, but the goſpel reſtores men to this glory. Chriſt has *brought life and immortality thro' the goſpel*; by it believers, who *walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit*, are made the *children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt*, and ſo ſhall be glorified with him, and ſhall receive *an inheritance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away*.

As to the third thing, *viz.* the appearance of the grace of God, or the goſpel. I told you, that it appeared, 1*ſt*, In the appearing and coming of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.* The grace of God was diſplayed in all the circumſtances of his appearance. His kindneſs and love to men was ſhewn in a very glorious manner, in ſending ſo excellent and beloved a perſon into the world

world in so mean and humble a condition, to converse with such sinful and unworthy creatures; the riches of the divine grace, and the whole doctrine of the gospel was displayed in our Saviour's preaching, which preaching was fully confirmed by his miracles and wonderful works: The divine *philanthropy* appeared in the highest manner in the sufferings and death of this glorious person; and the truth and certainty of all this is manifest in his resurrection from the dead. 2*dly*, The grace of God, or the gospel, appeared by the preaching of the apostles, and others of the first christians; according to what is said, *Tit.* i. 3. *But hath in due times manifested his word thro' preaching.* As the apostles preached that *the kingdom of God was at hand*, whilst our Saviour was on earth, so after his ascension, they, according to their commission, preached it as actually come; they preached the gospel, and faithfully published every part of it; they neglected not to declare the whole counsel of God. 3*dly*. The grace of God, or the gospel, appeared by the miracles that accompanied the preaching of it. Thus the gospel appeared, beyond all contradiction, to be the true grace of God, for this was an undeniable evidence of its divine original and authority. As our Saviour wrought miracles for the confirmation of his mission, and the disciples also, while he was on earth, so, when after his resurrection he sent them forth

SERM. XVI.

to

SERM. XVI.

to preach the gospel, he furnished them with a power of doing wonderful works in his name, that their heavenly doctrine might, by this means, have its due influence on the minds of men. And thus the apostles, wherever they came and preached, wrought miracles; by which means the grace of God in the gospel, and the truth of that dispensation, appeared in a most glorious and conspicuous manner, and with such a light and lustre, as by none, but wilful sinners, could be unheeded or disregarded. *4thly*, The grace of God, or the gospel, appeared, and does still appear in the writings of the apostles and evangelists. At the first men received the doctrine of christianity from the mouths of the apostles; but even then, as the apostles could not be always in all places, lest their doctrine should be corrupted in their absence, they committed the gospel to writing; by which means, also, it was still further propagated and displayed; and thus it is conveyed down to us, thus it appears to us.

As to the fourth thing, *viz.* How the grace of God appeared to all men; I told you, that it appeared, *1st*, To men of all nations, to *Jews* and *Gentiles*. This was agreeable to the antient prophecies. Christ sent his disciples, before his resurrection, only *to the lost sheep of the house of* Israel, and commanded them, saying, *Go not into the way of the* Gentiles, *and into any city of the* Samaritans

Samaritans *enter ye not:* But, after his resurrection, he enlarged their commission, and sent them to all the nations of the *Gentiles*, as well as to the *Jews*. And accordingly the apostles executed their commission, and preached the gospel to all nations. 2*dly*, The grace of God appeared to all men, so as that wherever it was preached, it was declared to belong to all degrees and conditions of men, and even to every individual that would accept of it. SERM. XVI.

V. I come now to consider what this grace of God, or the gospel, teaches: And here I shall consider, 1*st*, The things that it teaches. 2*dly*, How it teaches them.

1. We are to consider the things that the gospel teaches; it teaches us, *that denying ungodliness, and wordly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.* These words briefly contain the whole of what we should avoid, and what we should practise. The whole christian life is comprised in them.

1. The grace of God teaches us to *deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts.* And here I shall consider, 1*st*, What we are to understand by *ungodliness, and worldly lusts.* 2*dly*, What it is to deny them.

1. What are we to understand by *ungodliness, and worldly lusts?*

1*st*, By *ungodliness*, ἀσέβεια, we are to understand, the want of that veneration that is

SERM. XVI. due to God, or whatever is contrary to the worſhip, homage and reſpect that we owe unto him. Which is, 1. All idolatry, ſuperſtition, and falſe worſhip. Idolatry may well be called *ungodlineſs*, foraſmuch as it is a forſaking of the true God, and the giving of that worſhip and honour to idols and falſe gods which is due unto him only: Hence the *Gentile* world, who were univerſally addicted to this vice, are, by way of eminence, called *the ungodly*. And as idolatry, ſo ſuperſtition, and all manner of falſe worſhip, ſuch as is neither juſtifiable by the light of nature, nor any where appointed in the divine word, may very juſtly come under this character, which, tho' it may ſeem to ſhew a greater veneration of God, does really proceed from, and diſcover unworthy thoughts and apprehenſions concerning him and his government, and ſo may very well be called *ungodlineſs*. 2. All ſtupid ignorance and ſenſeleſſneſs of God, all atheiſtical and unbelieving thoughts concerning God, his providence, and the like, and all unbecoming apprehenſions of his nature and attributes, are the ungodlineſs which we ought to deny. Many, who by the uſe of their reaſon and divine revelation might come to the knowledge of their Creator, remain notwithſtanding careleſsly ignorant of him: And others, willingly entertain unbelieving thoughts of him, ſtudy to evade the force of the proofs of his exiſtence, which, to un-

prejudiced reaſon, are moſt clear and mani- SERM.
feſt, and willingly doubt of his providence in XVI.
governing the world, and ordering the affairs
of his creatures: And others again, tho' they believe all this, yet have willingly imbibed corrupt and unworthy apprehenſions of God, and of his attributes, of his juſtice, goodneſs and mercy, and the like; making him in effect to act unjuſtly, thinking he will not be ſo juſt as to puniſh wilful ſin, and yet he will be ſo merciful as to pardon thoſe who wilfully continue in it. Now all theſe are in ſome degree or other ungodly. 3. All practical irreligion and profaneneſs; ſuch as perjury, or forſwearing one's ſelf; taking the name of God in vain, or to no purpoſe; all profane and raſh ſwearing in common converſation; all vile ſcoffing and jeering at religion, which is too commonly practiſed by many; all contempt of the divine word, and diſreſpect ſhewn to the divine precepts; all neglect of religious worſhip, publick or private, and the like: All this is that *ungodlineſs* which the grace of God, or the goſpel, teaches us to deny.

2*dly*, As to *wordly luſts*, by them we are to underſtand, 1. All intemperance and exceſs, all gluttony and drunkenneſs, all inordinate gratifications of our paſſions and appetites, all unlawful pleaſure ariſing from carnal and ſenſual enjoyments, from luxury and uncleaneſs, and the like. 2. All immode-

SERM. XVI.

rate desires after, and love to the things of this life; the setting our affection on things on the earth; all covetousness, and inordinate love of wealth, and riches, and worldly possessions; all unjust, and unlawful ways of getting and encreasing these things; all oppression, extortion, rapine, couzening and cheating; all inordinate desires after worldly goods; all immoderate pursuits after them; all trusting in them; all excessive joy in the possession of them; all perplexing and tormenting fears of losing them; and all excessive grief for being deprived of them. 3. All pride and ambition; all high thoughts of ourselves, priding ourselves in ornaments and dress, or any thing else; and all eager desires after high titles, and places of honour and dignity in the world. These, and such like, are the κοσμικαὶ ἐπιθυμίαι, the *worldly lusts*, spoken of in our text; which are the same with what the apostle *John* calls the *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*; or the lust of pleasures, the lust of riches, and of making a fine appearance in the world, and the lust of power, dignity and authority; and these he after calls the *lust of the world*. Thus we see what we are to understand by *ungodliness and worldly lusts*. We are,

2. To consider what it is to deny them, as the grace of God teaches; *teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts*. Now, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,

lusts, is to renounce and forsake them, and take care that we never more admit them in our heart or conversation: And so it is the same with repentance, which is the work of our lives, wherein we forsake our former evil ways and sinful courses, and deny ourselves for the future the pleasure we used to take in them. Thus to deny ungodliness, is to forsake and depart from whatever is contrary to the true worship of God, and to that veneration and respect which we owe to him; it is to abstain from idolatry, superstition, and all false worship; to banish from our minds all atheistical and unbelieving, all unbecoming and irreverent thoughts of God, of his attributes, his word, his precepts, his promises, and his threatenings; to renounce the love of any thing when it stands in competition with the love of God, and all confidence in any thing short of him, and to free our conversation from all prophaneness, irreligion, and rebellion against God. And to deny worldly lusts, is to deny ourselves of all unlawful desires and delights, of all sinful pleasures and enjoyments. It is to avoid all intemperance and excess, all sensuality and impurity; to renounce the love of the world, all earthly-mindedness, covetousness and unlawful gain; and to suppress the motions of pride and ambition that are apt to arise in us, and which are cherished by the men of this world. Thus the grace of God teaches *us to*

SERM. XVI.

SERM. XVI.

deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to avoid whatever is contrary to our duty to God, ourſelves, or our neighbour. And we ſhould, accordingly, flee from idolatry, and renounce all irreligion and profaneneſs: We ſhould *abſtain from fleſhly luſts, which war againſt the ſoul; ſhould mortify the deeds of the body, and ſhould crucify the fleſh with the affections and luſts; we ſhould caſt off the works of darkneſs, and walk honeſtly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenneſs, not in chambering and wantonneſs, not in ſtrife and envying; but ſhould put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and make no proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof; we ſhould mortify our members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, which is idolatry.* We ſhould take heed and beware of covetouſneſs, and that our hearts be not overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life. And we ſhould remember to deny *all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*; not only ſome ſins, but all are to be forſaken and avoided; we ſhould therefore renounce ungodlineſs in every inſtance of it, and ſhould mortify and crucify every vicious luſt, and every unlawful deſire and practice: It ſhould be the work of our lives to do this, not only to purge our converſation from ſin, but to root it out of our hearts; we ſhould always hate and abhor it; ſhould keep at a diſtance, and turn away from it, and ſhould take

take care that we never admit of any thing, any desire or practice, that is contrary to the will and word of our Creator. Thus we have considered the first thing that the gospel teaches, *viz. denying of ungodliness and worldly lusts.* SERM. XVI.

2*dly*, The gospel teaches us to *live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.* It not only teaches us a negative religion, shewing us what we should deny and abstain from, as *all ungodliness and worldly lusts*; but also requires positive holiness and obedience to all the divine precepts, even all manner of good works: For under these three heads, the whole of our duty is contained; sobriety, respecting the government of ourselves; righteousness, comprehending the duties we owe to our neighbour; and godliness, containing under it all the duties that respect God immediately. And these duties must not be separated from one another; it will not avail to be sober, unless we are also righteous; nor to be sober and righteous, unless we are also godly: They must be all practised together, and that as long as we live, during our abode in this present world; we must *live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.* I shall consider these duties in their order. And,

1*st*, Concerning sobriety; the gospel teaches us to live *soberly*. This virtue consists in the

SERM. XVI.

due government of ourſelves, and is diſcovered in ſeveral inſtances.

1*ſt*, One main part of ſobriety and temperance, whereby we moderate all our appetites, and our uſe of worldly pleaſures and enjoyments. Thus as to eating and drinking, we ſhould conſider that the true deſign of them, is the ſuſtentation of nature, and the preſervation of life and health, and ſhould never uſe them otherwiſe than is conſiſtent with theſe ends; and all the pleaſures we allow ourſelves in, both as to the nature and meaſure of them, ſhould be ſuch as are juſtifiable by reaſon, and will never need our repentance; as will neither hurt our body nor debaſe our mind, nor render us unfit for the ſervice of our Creator. Thus we are bid to add to our knowledge temperance, and temperance is ſaid to be one of the fruits of the ſpirit. In this ſenſe ſobriety is oppoſed to intemperance.

2*dly*, Another main part of ſobriety is in moderating our love to all earthly things, and having a ſuperior regard to the things of heaven. Our deſire of worldly poſſeſſions and enjoyments, ſhould not be too eager and intenſe; our purſuits after them ſhould be moderate, our joy in obtaining them, and grief, in caſe we ſhould be deprived of them, ſhould be kept within due bounds. We ſhould not ſet our hearts on theſe periſhing things; but ſhould ſet our affections on things

things above, ſhould place our happineſs in them, and do our utmoſt to obtain them. In this ſenſe, ſobriety is oppoſed to ſordidneſs and earthly-mindedneſs. SERM. XVI.

3*dly*, If we would live ſoberly, we muſt keep all our paſſions within their proper bounds and limits: We muſt not let our love or our hatred, our joy or grief, or any other paſſion, grow unruly and exorbitant, and exceed the bounds of reaſon. But eſpecially the paſſion of anger ſhould be carefully guarded, which, if it grow exceſſive, as it very eaſily does, if it be once admitted, is no better than a ſhort phrenzy or madneſs, exceedingly diſturbing the mind, and diſordering the body, and producing often very diſmal effects. And thus ſobriety is oppoſed to all inordinate paſſions.

4*thly*, Sobriety alſo diſcovers itſelf in contentment with our outward ſtate and condition; ſo, that though we are in mean and low circumſtances, our mind is eaſy, ſerene and quiet, we readily acquieſce in the diſpoſal of divine Providence, and are kept from murmuring and repining, becauſe we are not in ſo good a condition as others. Thus the apoſtle ſays, that *godlineſs with contentment is great gain*; and he had learnt in whatſoever ſtate he was, therewith to be content, to have a ſelf-ſufficiency and fulneſs in the midſt of the greateſt want; and he exhorts the chriſtians to *be content with ſuch things as*

SERM. XVI.

as they have. Thus ſobriety may be conſidered, as oppoſed to diſcontent and uneaſineſs, at our outward circumſtances.

5*thly*, Modeſty and humility is alſo another great inſtance of ſobriety; whereby we have mean and low thoughts, and a modeſt opinion of ourſelves, are not wiſe in our own conceits, are not high-minded, nor puffed up with a vain and fond opinion of our own abilities and acquirements; but keep all thoughts, concerning ourſelves and our attainments, within the bounds of reaſon. *Rom.* xii. 3. *For, I ſay, through the grace of God given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himſelf more highly than he ought to think, but to think ſoberly, according as God has dealt to every man the meaſure of faith.* In this ſenſe, ſobriety is oppoſed to pride.

6*thly*, This virtue alſo diſcovers itſelf in patience and conſtancy under affliction; whereby we bear all our ſufferings with an even and calm temper of mind; are not ruffled nor diſordered thereby, nor moved from the way of piety and holineſs. In this ſenſe ſobriety is oppoſed to impatience. Thus we ſee what is that ſobriety which the goſpel teaches.

2*dly*, The ſecond thing which the goſpel teaches us to practiſe, is righteouſneſs; it teaches us to *live righteouſly*. Under this head

head is contained all our duty to our neighbour, as juſtice and charity. SERM. XVI.

1*ſt*, The firſt branch of our duty to our neighbour is juſtice, which conſiſts in giving every one his due, in paying every one his own, and being faithful and true to our word. Thus the apoſtle exhorts, *Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſtom to whom cuſtom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.* We ſhould be juſt and honeſt in all our dealings with one another, ſhould take care that we injure none in any reſpect, that we do no wrong, that we do no injuſtice or violence to any, that we bring no evil or harm upon him, that we hurt him not in his perſon, in his reputation, in his eſtate, or in any reſpect whatſoever. Thus all men ought to behave towards one another; but there are ſome particular duties, that reſult from particular relations: Thus the wife ſhould be ſubject to her huſband, and the huſbands ſhould love their wives, and ſhould not be bitter againſt them; children ſhould obey their parents, and parents ſhould take care of their children; ſervants ſhould pleaſe their maſters, and be faithful in their buſineſs, and maſters ſhould give unto their ſervants that which is juſt and equal; ſubjects ſhould obey their governors in all lawful things, and governors ſhould protect their ſubjects.

2*dly*,

SERM. XVI.

2*dly*, The ſecond branch of our duty to our neighbour, is charity, which is of very large extent, for we ſhould love our neighbour, *i. e.* all men, as ourſelves. Accordingly, we ſhould avoid all diſreſpect, all ill-will, envy and malice againſt our neighbour; and ſhould maintain a kind, tender and compaſſionate reſpect for him; ſhould bear no grudge, rancour or hatred in our breaſt againſt any, but ſhould have a ſincere love, a hearty affection, a conſtant and unfeigned good-will towards all men. We ſhould alſo maintain a kind, reſpectful and courteous behaviour towards others; our words and geſtures ſhould be as inoffenſive as poſſible, void of all reproach and reflection, of all wrath and anger, of all haughtineſs and ſcorn, and the like; and we ſhould exerciſe a mild and gentle, a condeſcending, courteous and affable demeanour towards them: *Charity behaves not itſelf unſeemly*, gives no reproachful language, makes uſe of no opprobrious or diſgraceful reflections, treats no one rudely in words or actions, but uſes a becoming and reſpectful carriage towards all. In the next place, we ſhould do all the good we can to every one: We ſhould help thoſe who need our help, as far as our ability will permit; we ſhould contribute to the ſupply of others neceſſities, as we have opportunity, and ſhould endeavour to promote their temporal and eternal welfare

welfare. The apoſtle ſays, *As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, eſpecially to thoſe who are of the houſhold of faith.* We ſhould be compaſſionate towards them that are in miſery, ſhould ſympathize with them, and commiſerate them in their misfortunes and afflictions, and ſhould, like the merciful *Samaritan*, endeavour to relieve them. We ſhould ſtudy to further our neighbour's good in every reſpect, ſhould take care of his reputation, and if we know any thing amiſs of him, we ſhould be ready to conceal it; for charity covereth, or concealeth all things, πάντα στέγει, and love hideth all ſins: We ſhould do him all the good we can in his perſon and eſtate; for charity is not ſo ſelfiſh, as to ſeek her own merely. Finally, We ſhould be ready to give him advice and counſel, to pray for him, and to do him good in his ſoul and body; we ſhould deſire and rejoice in, and to our utmoſt promote his welfare in every reſpect. Furthermore, Chriſtian charity obliges us to avoid judging, cenſuring or condemning others. Our bleſſed Saviour moſt ſtrictly prohibits this judging and cenſuring; *Judge not*, ſays he, *and ye ſhall not be judged, condemn not, and ye ſhall not be condemned*, Luke vi. 37. This practice is moſt unreaſonable and unchriſtian, and altogether contrary to that love and charity which we owe to one another. We ſhould hope the beſt, and believe the

SERM. XVI.

SERM. XVI. the beſt we can of all, and ſhould be ready to put the moſt favourable conſtruction poſſible upon all their actions; *Charity thinketh no evil*, or is not diſpoſed to think evil, *Charity believeth all things, and hopeth all things*; it is ready to believe that good of others, that it has but the leaſt ground for, and when there is ſome reaſon to doubt of a man's ſincerity, it ſtill hopes the beſt. To conclude this head, chriſtian charity obliges us to forgive one another, andto be ready to paſs by injuries that we may have ſuffered. This duty of forgiving one another, is moſt ſtrictly enjoined by our Saviour, and without it, our charity is looked upon as imperfect. Thus have we conſidered the duties to be performed to one another, which the goſpel teaches, in teaching us to *live righteouſly*. It teaches us to do to others, as we would reaſonably expect and deſire others to do to us.

3*dly*, The third great duty which the goſpel teaches, is godlineſs; it teaches us to live εὐσεβῶς, piouſly and religiouſly. Now piety, or godlineſs, conſiſts chiefly in theſe things, 1*ſt*, In loving God. 2*dly*, Fearing him. 3*dly*, Truſting in him. 4*thly*, Confeſſing and acknowledging him before men. 5*thly*, Worſhipping and adoring him. 6*thly*, Obeying all his commandments.

1*ſt*, One main inſtance of piety, is in loving God, in having a ſincere affection to him,

him, ardent desires after him, a hearty esteem and value for him, taking delight and complacency in him, rejoicing in him, and the like. Thus we should love God sincerely, and above all persons and things besides, with a prevailing affection and superlative respect. As he is the most excellent Being and the chief good, he is certainly to be prefered before all, both in our judgment and affection; and as he is our supreme Benefactor, he undoubtedly deserves our greatest love and respect; we should chuse him and cleave to him above all, and place all our happiness in him. Thus we are commanded to love the Lord our God, *with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength, i. e.* with a sincere and prevalent affection. SERM. XVI.

2*dly*, Godliness consists in fearing God. As we ought to love God, so we should also fear him, should have awful and reverential thoughts and apprehensions of his divine majesty, should be duly impressed with a sense of his excellency, of his exceeding great power and glory, and should have a dread of his sovereignty and supreme authority over us. The fear of God, is so essential to godliness, that it is often put for the whole of it; and certainly, without it, we can have no true piety at all. We should sanctify the Lord of hosts in our hearts, and should make him our fear and our dread; should have

SERM. XVI. have an awful ſenſe of his attributes, and a due reverence of his authority, and ſhould fear to offend him in any reſpect.

3*dly*, Another part of piety, is truſt and confidence, and hope in God; whereby we quietly commit ourſelves to him, firmly depend on him, and expect the enjoyment of all good from him. We are often called on to truſt in God, and to place our confidence and our hope in him: And truly if we conſider his goodneſs and all-ſufficiency, the many promiſes he has made to us, in his word, and the aſſurance he has given us of his love and grace, and mercy in Chriſt Jeſus, we have abundant reaſon and encouragement to truſt and hope in God.

4*thly*, Another act of piety or godlineſs, is confeſſing or ackowledging God before men. This is an external act of piety, as the others were internal. And certainly wherever true piety is in the heart, it will diſcover itſelf in ſuitable words and actions. In this confeſſion and acknowledgment, we openly take the Lord Jehovah to be our God, we own his name and ways, and publickly declare ourſelves both in words and actions, to be his ſervants; we are not aſhamed of him, of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, nor of his goſpel, but willingly profeſs ourſelves ſubjects to it, and publickly avow ourſelves to be the people of God.

5*thly*,

5thly, One material act of piety or godliness, is worshipping and adoring God. This is both internal and external, performed by the mind together with the body, which discovers the veneration we have for the divine majesty, and the disposition of the mind towards him, by humble and reverential gestures, such as kneeling, prostration, uncovering the head, lifting up the hands and eyes to heaven, and the like; which gestures we read of in scripture, as those, by which the servants of God testified their inward veneration for him. Now in this adoration, and worship, as we humbly ascribe all possible perfections to the divine Being, and bow our minds in a sense of them, so we pray to God and request blessings from him, and give him thanks for those we have already received, and bless and praise his great and glorious name. And we should always remember to worship him through the Mediator Jesus Christ. SERM. XVI.

Lastly, True piety is discovered in obeying all the commands of God, in obeying them as his commands, in complying with his ordinances, as his ordinances, in having respect to all his precepts, as his precepts: Thus, even the duties we owe to ourselves, and our neighbour, become a part of piety, as they are performed in obedience to God. And so much for the things the gospel teaches; I should now come to consider how

SERM. XVI.

it teaches them; but this, with what remains, I shall leave to another discourse, and shall conclude this, by exhorting you seriously to consider, and put in practice the virtues and duties I have briefly described to you, and to persevere in the practice of them. Let it be your constant care to abstain from all those vices, that are contrary to such a holy conversation, even to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts. Do you abhor that which is evil, and abstain from all appearance of it, and cleave to, and hold fast that which is good. Let sobriety, righteousness and godliness, adorn your whole conversation; that walking thus agreeably to the gospel, you may, with comfort, look *for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*; *and may not be ashamed before him, at his coming*; but being of the number of those who do the will of his heavenly Father, may have *an entrance administered to you abundantly into his everlasting kingdom.*

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SERMON XVII.

Salvation wrought by the Grace of GOD.

TITUS ii. 11, 12.

For the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts; we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.

IN my firſt diſcourſe on theſe words, I conſidered, SERM. XVII.

I. What we are to underſtand by this *grace of God.*
II. How it brings ſalvation.
III. Its appearance.
IV. How it *appeared to all men.*
The V*th* thing to be conſidered was, What this grace of God, or the goſpel teaches.
And the VI*th*, How this appearance of the grace of God is an argument for our leading a holy and righteous life.

SERM. XVII. Under the fifth of these, I proposed to consider, *1st*, The things themselves which the gospel teaches. *2dly*, How, and by what methods it teaches them.

The first of these was the subject of the second discourse; wherein I told you, that the gospel teaches, *1st*, To *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*. *2dly*, To *live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world*.

1. The grace of God, or the gospel, teaches to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*. To *deny ungodliness*, *i. e.* to renounce, forsake and abstain from all idolatry, superstition and false worship; all unbelieving and atheistical, all unbecoming and unworthy thoughts of God; and all practical irreligion and prophaneness. *And worldly lusts*, *i. e.* all intemperance, wantonness and excess; all inordinate desires after, and love to the things of this world; and all pride and ambition.

2. The gospel teaches us to *live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world*. Under these three heads of sobriety, righteousness and godliness, is contained the whole of our duty in relation to ourselves, our neighbour, and to God. Sobriety contains our duty with respect to the government of ourselves; and consists in temperance, whereby we moderate all our appetites, and our use of worldly pleasures and enjoyments; in moderating our love to all earthly

earthly things, and having a ſuperior regard to the things of heaven; in keeping all our paſſions within their proper bounds and limits, as our love, our hatred, our joy or grief, but eſpecially the paſſion of anger; in contentment with our outward ſtate and condition; in modeſty and humility; and in patience and conſtancy under affliction. Righteouſneſs contains our duty to our neighbour, as juſtice and charity; juſtice, whereby we are bound to give every one his due, to pay every one his own, and to injure none by any means, nor in any reſpect: Charity, whereby we are obliged ſincerely to love all men, to bear a kind affection to them, to ſhew a kind, reſpectful and courteous behaviour to them; to do them all the good we can; to avoid judging, cenſuring and condemning one another, and to forgive one another. Godlineſs contains our duty with reſpect to God; and by it we are obliged to *love the Lord our God with all our heart*, to fear and reverence him, and to truſt and hope in him, to confeſs and acknowledge him before men, to adore and worſhip him, to pray and give thanks to him, and to obey all his commandments. SERM. XVII.

2. I come now to conſider, how and by what methods the goſpel teaches us theſe things.

1ſt, It teaches theſe things, by the many precepts and expreſs commands of it. If we

SERM. XVII. examine the gospel of Christ, we shall easily find that it contains not only a discovery of the divine grace or favour to men, but also many precepts and commands, which strictly require us to maintain holiness, *i. e.* a virtuous, sober and pious life, and to order our conversation aright in every respect with regard to God, ourselves, and our neighbour. The gospel, by no means, gives liberty to men to live as they will, nor does it in the least countenance a licentious and vicious life, but requires, and expressly enjoins sobriety, righteousness and piety, and purity and integrity in all our actions. Some of the commands of the gospel are very comprehensive, and enjoin this holiness in general, as, *Rom.* vi. 19. *Yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.* Heb. xii. 14. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness.* 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. *Be ye holy in all manner of conversation; and be ye holy, for I am holy.* And as holiness consists in the exercise of the virtues which are mentioned in our text, in *living soberly, righteously and godly in the world*, so whatever precepts enjoin holiness or virtue in general, they must be understood to enjoin all those virtues, and all the particular duties contained under them. And as there are many of these general commands in the gospel, so there are many particular ones that enjoin the exercise of sobriety, righteousness, charity, and godliness in particular. Thus in some parts

parts of the gospel we are commanded to *love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength*; to fear and reverence him, to adore and worship him, and to perform the several duties that immediately respect him; to pray to him, to bless and praise his name, and to return him the thanks that are due for the many blessings he bestows upon us. In other places we are commanded to be just and righteous, to give every one his own, and to render to every one his due, and to injure none by our words or actions; to be charitable and beneficent, to love our neighbour as ourselves, and to do good to all as we have opportunity: And, *finally, Whatsoever things we would that men should do to us, to do so even to them.* And again, elsewhere we are required by the precepts of the gospel, to exercise all those duties that relate to the government of ourselves; to be sober, chaste, and temperate, humble and modest, patient and contented, and the like; to take heed to ourselves, that our hearts be not over-charged, and to *set our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth*, and to order all our thoughts, words and actions in a becoming manner. *Finally*, We are in the gospel most strictly required to depart from all iniquity, to abstain from fleshly lusts, to abandon a sinful and impious course of life; and, as in our text, to *deny ungodliness and worldly*

SERM. XVII.

SERM. XVII. *luſts*; and we are expreſsly and frequently commanded to follow after righteouſneſs, holineſs, piety, charity and ſobriety, and all manner of good and commendable actions. How often is the performance of good works enjoined us in the goſpel, and the practice of holineſs and virtue urged moſt plainly and expreſsly therein? We are there commanded to *mortify the deeds of the body, to crucify the fleſh with the affections and luſts*, and *to walk after the ſpirit*; to oppoſe all the dictates of corrupt and inordinate affections and paſſions, and to *walk in newneſs of life*. All the precepts of the goſpel are holy, and enjoin holineſs in every reſpect; and ſo it teaches us, by precept, to *deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent-world.*

2*dly*, As the goſpel teaches us theſe things by precept, ſo it does by example, the holy and ſpotleſs example of Jeſus Chriſt, the founder of it. Our bleſſed Saviour, while he was on earth, inſtructed men, and was a light to them, not only by his doctrine, but by the holineſs, and perfect purity of his converſation. His whole life was, as it were, one continued act of goodneſs, holineſs and charity, and a continual exerciſe of the moſt enlarged piety and virtue. He was *holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners*; he became a familiar example of holineſs and righteouſneſs to us, and his converſation on earth

earth is frequently propoſed for our imitation. He gave us remarkable inſtances of piety in his whole life, and ſhewed us, by his example, how we ought to reverence and worſhip God, and wherein his true ſervice does conſiſt; he was a bright and glorious pattern of righteouſneſs, charity and meekneſs; he *went about doing good*, and ſpent his life in acts of kindneſs, and in works of charity and mercy. He was innocent and compaſſionate, peaceable and gentle, was always doing good to the ſouls and bodies of men, and promoted the true welfare of all with whom he converſed. His life was altogether ſpotleſs and unblameable, and his converſation was entirely free from all kind of diſorder; he *did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth*; he injured none, but did good unto all, even to his greateſt enemies and perſecutors. His mind was not diſordered by any irregular paſſion or appetite, nor his converſation polluted by any vicious practice: Tho' he was ſubject to the innocent infirmities of human nature, yet he was perfectly free from ſin, and was never guilty of any irregularity, but his converſation was altogether holy and pure, and all kind of virtues appeared moſt conſpicuous in him; he maintained holineſs in every reſpect, and made the will of his heavenly Father the rule of all his actions; nothing but conformity to the divine will, and obedience to the divine law,

SERM. XVII.

SERM. XVII. was to be seen in him; every thing that is sinful and unlawful was constantly avoided by him, and he was addicted only to what is good, and just, and holy. His example, in the highest manner, recommended sobriety, righteousness and godliness; and, as I said, is frequently in scripture proposed for our imitation; as, *Eph.* v. 2. *Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.* Phil. ii. 5. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* 1 John ii. 6. *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.* 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22, 23. *Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* Thus then Jesus Christ, the author of the gospel, being perfectly holy and pure, and his example being frequently recommended to us in it, we are certainly thereby taught to be *holy in all manner of conversation*, even to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.*

3*dly*, The gospel teaches us these things, in that it every where acquaints us, that it was the design of this dispensation to promote them. The design of the gospel is declared to be, not only our salvation from the con-

condemnation and punishment of sin, but also, and in order thereunto, from the power and dominion of it, and the promotion of holiness and righteousness in the world; that we might be delivered from the pollution and disorder of our minds, and turned from an irregular and sinful conversation; that we might be set free from the dominion of our transgressions, and might serve God in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. The gospel acquaints us, that the design of God in sending his Son Jesus into the world, was to turn men from their iniquities, as well as to deliver them from the wrath to come; and that our Saviour came, not only to make an atonement for sin, but to encourage and advance holiness and piety, and to reduce men to the practice of righteousness; not only to *redeem us from all iniquity*, or from the punishment of our crimes, but to *purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*; to purge us from the defilement of our iniquities, as well as to obtain for us the pardon of our transgressions: And accordingly his doctrine and example, and all his actions, manifestly tended every way to discourage and discountenance ungodliness and unrighteousness, and to recommend a holy, righteous and pious life. *Finally*, We may see, by the whole current of the gospel, that holiness is the design of this glorious dispensation, and that righteousness, piety, sobriety, SERM. XVII.

SERM. XVII. ty, and all kind of good works, are all along aimed at in it. It is declared in the gospel, that *God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness*; and that his design therein is, that we should *be holy, and without blame before him in love:* It is said, that *we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained, that we should walk in them*, Eph. ii. 10. And therefore the discourses of our Lord himself, as also the writings of his apostles, abound every where with exhortations, encouragements, expostulations and intreaties to the performance of good works, and the exercise of a religious and holy course of life. Thus the gospel teaches us to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*, by teaching us, that it is the design of the gospel that we should so do.

4*thly*, The gospel teaches men to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*, by the threatenings that are therein denounced against all who persist in such courses. The gospel threatens the wicked with the severest punishment. Impenitent sinners, who refuse to turn from their sins, and to betake themselves to a holy life, shall not only be deprived of the happiness and glory promised in the gospel, but shall be condemned to the greatest pain, misery and destruction in the world to come; and this the gospel plainly declares. There

we

we read, that *the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,* 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8, 9. In the goſpel, *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs.* There it is declared, that *God will render indignation and wrath to them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs; and that tribulation and anguiſh ſhall be upon every ſoul of man that doth evil, of the* Jew *firſt, and alſo of the* Gentile. In the goſpel we are informed, that *God will reward every one according to his works*; and he aſſures men, that *except they repent, they ſhall all periſh:* We are told, that the impenitent man *treaſures up to himſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* Now, if the goſpel declares, that perſons who perſiſt in a ſinful courſe ſhall be rewarded according to their works, *i. e.* ſhall not only loſe the glory of the righteous, but ſhall have the ſevereſt puniſhment inflicted on them, one would reaſonably expect, that all to whom the goſpel appears, with evidence and authority, ſhould be deterred from ſuch a practice hereby, as many have

SERM. XVII.

SERM. XVII.

have been and are; and thus the gospel teaches men to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*.

5*thly*, The gospel teaches men to do thus, and to *live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world*, by the many great and glorious promises therein made to persons who so live. The gospel contains various promises of pardon and salvation, of eternal felicity and glory in the world to come; and all the promises are declared to belong to them who repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance, and to them only. The remission of sins is undoubtedly annexed to repentance; this is plain from several scriptures; *John* preached *the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*; the apostles were sent to preach *repentance and remission of sins to all nations*; and the apostle *Peter* exhorts the *Jews* to *repent and be converted, that their sins may be blotted out*. Now it must certainly be a very great encouragement to repentance, that the forgiveness of sins is promised to it, and that God will pass by our transgressions, and forbear to punish us for them, if we repent and turn from them, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance: But the gospel assures us, that we shall not only have our sins forgiven, *i. e.* be delivered from the punishment of them, if we thus repent, but be raised to the enjoyment of the highest happiness and glory, and that for ever,

ever, if we perſevere in well-doing. The promiſes of eternal life and glory are made only to the righteous, to thoſe who follow after holineſs, to thoſe who ſincerely obey the laws of Chriſt, to thoſe who *mortify the deeds of the body*, and *have their fruit unto holineſs*; and certainly this muſt be a great encouragement and inducement unto repentance, and new obedience, to forſake ſin, and follow after righteouſneſs in all the parts of it. SERM. XVII.

6thly, The goſpel teaches us to *deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in the world*, by means of the influence and aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit. The goſpel not only commands, and enjoins, and recommends holineſs, but alſo promiſes and affords all ſuitable aſſiſtance for that purpoſe. It is certainly a moſt difficult thing for any that have been accuſtomed to ſinful practices, and have thereby contracted many vicious habits, to caſt off ſuch practices, and to conquer ſuch irregular diſpoſitions; but, tho' this be ſo hard a matter, God has aſſured us in the goſpel, that he will grant his gracious aſſiſtance to them who ſincerely deſire, and endeavour to do his will, to enable them to avoid ſin, and to execute all the parts of their duty; and there is ſuch an influence, and ſacred energy conveyed to men thro' the goſpel, as is ſufficient to diſpoſe, and prepare their minds, and to aſſiſt them

SERM. XVII.

them to obey the divine precepts. We have, in the gospel, the promise of the Holy Spirit, by whose influence, and assistance, we may be enabled to forsake that which is evil, and to cleave to that which is good. God has engaged, in his word, to afford us his gracious help, whereby we may be prepared to withstand all temptations, and has assured us, that he will enable us to go thro' all afflictions that we may endure for the sake of a good conscience. He, by his grace, or favour, which is conveyed in the gospel, gives men all necessary assistance for repentance, to enable them to turn from sin, and to correct their vicious habits; and affords his servants all suitable help and ability to continue in the exercise of their duty, which should certainly be an inducement to them to use their utmost endeavours herein; as the apostle makes use of it as an argument to persuade them to it, *Phil.* ii. 12, 13. *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is the Lord who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*, i. e. do you endeavour earnestly to avoid sin, and to persist in the practice of your duty, seeing God graciously excites, disposes, and enables you so to do. Thus have we seen how, and by what methods the gospel teaches us to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*,

luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly, SERM.
in this preſent word. It teaches us this by XVII.
precept, by example, by the manifeſt and
conſtant deſign and ſcope of it, by the
threatenings and promiſes of it, and by the
influence and aſſiſtance of the holy ſpirit.

VI. I come now to the ſixth and laſt thing, which is to conſider, how this appearance of the grace of God or the goſpel, is an argument for our leading a holy and righteous life. This may appear, in great meaſure, from what has been already obſerved; but I ſhall add ſome further conſiderations.

1ſt, The grace of God thus appearing, and teaching us theſe things, is an argument for our leading a holy and righteous life, if we conſider the ſufficient knowledge of our duty, and of the nature of ſuch a life, that we may have thereby. Thoſe to whom the goſpel has appeared, are inexcuſable, if they lead not a holy life, ſeeing this gives them ſo clear a view of it, contains ſo plain a declaration of the will of God, with reſpect to our duty. Indeed, the light of nature might have inſtructed us in the chief parts of our duty; but notwithſtanding this, it is certain, that before the goſpel of Chriſt was publiſhed to the world, the light of nature was very much obſcured, through the conſtant practice of vice, the prevalency of bad cuſtom, and the ſtrength of evil habits; and we may very well think, that without ſuch a

SERM. XVII. discovery of our duty, as the gospel of Christ contains, a man, though honest and sincere, may, by the perpetual example of those about him, and the force of an inveterate custom, be very easily led into many mistakes in this respect. But they who have the gospel, have no excuse for the neglect of their duty; for this contains so clear a manifestation of it in every respect, that it must argue either great negligence or wickedness, if we conform not to the practice of it. By the gospel we may plainly see every thing that should be avoided by us, what is displeasing to God, and unbecoming our nature; and therein, every thing that is agreeable to the divine will, and ought to be practised by us, is plainly and clearly expressed. The gospel teaches us fully and expressly how we ought to walk to please God; it not only describes our duty in general, gives us a complete view of our duty; but acquaints us with all the several parts of it: It teaches us how we ought to worship God, and what disposition of mind becomes us towards our great Creator; it lets us know how we ought to carry it, in every respect, to one another, and what duties are required of us in the several relations we stand in; it shews us how to govern ourselves, and how we ought to behave ourselves, in every condition: Finally, no part of our duty is omitted in the gospel, but every

every thing that is requiſite for us to perform, ſo clearly expreſſed, that we cannot be unacquainted with it, without being guilty of wilful ignorance. Now, as the more plainly our duty is declared to us, the more inexcuſable we ſhall be, if we conform not our practice to it; ſo this appearance of the grace of God, or the goſpel, is an argument for our leading a holy and righteous life, foraſmuch, as hereby, we have the plaineſt declaration of our duty. SERM. XVII.

2*dly*, The grace of God thus appearing, and teaching theſe things, is an argument for our leading a holy and righteous life, foraſmuch as the divine authority appears ſo manifeſtly therein. As God is the only ſupreme Being, our Creator and rightful Governor and Lawgiver, his authority ought to be had in the greateſt veneration and reſpect by us: But as God is the author of the goſpel, and accordingly, what it teaches, the divine authority teaches, when men neglect to comply with it, and on the contrary live an unholy life, they deſpiſe and trample upon their Creator's ſupream authority, than which there cannot be a greater, nor more heinous crime: Therefore, on the contrary, ſeeing the authority of God appears in the goſpel, and in what it teaches, we ſhould ſincerely comply with it, that is, with a holy, righteous and pious converſation, that

SERM. XVII. thereby we may teſtify our juſt veneration for the ſupreme authority.

3*dly*, If the grace of God has appeared, teaching us theſe things, we ought, in gratitude to him, to lead a holy life. Ingratitude is certainly a very bad crime, and the greater the benefactor is, to whom we are ungrateful, the greater is the crime of ingratitude; but God is our greateſt and moſt gracious benefactor, which appears eminently in the goſpel, that diſpenſation of his grace, which I treated of in my firſt diſcourſe on theſe words; and therefore ingratitude to him, is the worſt of crimes. But this crime we are certainly guilty of, if we do not lead a holy life, as the gracious diſpenſation of the goſpel requires us. If we neglect to lead this life, we diſpleaſe God, by diſobedience to his will; and diſhonour him, by contemning his authority; and ſo are certainly ungrateful towards him, and make very unſuitable returns to him, for his good-will to us, and his kindneſs towards us in Chriſt Jeſus. Gratitude is certainly due to every one, from whom we receive the leaſt favour; how much more then, is it due to God, who has favoured us in the higheſt manner, and has diſplayed the riches of his grace towards us in the goſpel? We ſhould, therefore, teſtify our gratitude to God, for his wonderful love and mercy, by doing thoſe things that pleaſe him, and that

tend to his honour and glory in the world, *i. e.* by living according to the gospel in all holiness and righteousness. SERM. XVII.

4*thly*, The grace of God appearing and teaching us these things, is an argument for our leading a holy life and conversation, if we consider our own happiness, which this grace aims at, by so teaching us. The desire of happiness is natural and common to all; but the worst of it is, that most like not, and therefore chuse not, the way that leads to it: They would be happy, but in their own way, they do not like the way that God has appointed: But certain it is, that as the glory of God, so our own happiness ought to influence us, and the consideration thereof, should induce us to chuse the way of holiness and piety, which only will lead us to the enjoyment of true felicity. The christian religion is designed to make men happy, all the divine discoveries contained in the gospel, all the offers of grace that are made, and the rules of duty laid down therein, tend all to this end; so that if men would sincerely follow and comply with them, they would not fail of obtaining true and eternal happiness; but if they will not obey the gospel, but obey unrighteousness, *they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*. The grace of God is designed to make us happy, but in the way

SERM. XVII.

of holineſs: Thoſe who are workers of iniquity, ſhall not be admitted into the heavenly kingdom, and *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord*; but if we would be happy hereafter, we muſt be holy in this world, and live as the grace of God teaches us. Thus I have ſhewn, how this appearance of the grace of God is an argument for our leading a holy and righteous life.

And now having gone thro' theſe words, I ſhall conclude with ſome brief application.

1. Let us recal to mind this great truth, that the deſign of the goſpel is to promote holineſs and righteouſneſs in the world; and therefore, our holineſs and happineſs are joined together in the goſpel, and are by no means to be ſeparated. All the moſt excellent benefits of this diſpenſation, are offered to us, and are to be enjoyed by us, only as we repent and turn to God; and the divine grace and mercy diſplayed therein, is propoſed to us, with a view to encourage us to a holy life.

2. Let us not forget that our ſalvation is originally of mere grace. The goſpel itſelf, the whole diſpenſation of it, is all of grace; and if ſo, the ſalvation promiſed therein, muſt be of grace too, and proceed originally from the free favour of God; we could have merited no ſuch bleſſing at his hands, by any works of ours.

3. Let

3. Let us remember to bleſs and praiſe God, for this his wonderful grace. Let us bleſs him for this his kindneſs towards us, in Chriſt Jeſus; let us praiſe him for the gracious diſpenſation of the goſpel, and for the diſcovery of his will therein contained. SERM. XVII.

4. To conclude. Let us all live as the grace of God, or the goſpel teaches; let us lead a life as it becomes the goſpel of Chriſt, and be holy in all manner of converſation, as knowing that *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* If we turn the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs, we ſhall receive the greater condemnation; but if we would obtain the ſalvation that is in Jeſus Chriſt with eternal glory, we muſt be holy in this life. Let us, therefore, ſincerely forſake ſin, and abſtain from every kind of evil, and addict ourſelves to the practice of holineſs. Finally, Let us *deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent world.*

☞ *The* AUTHOR *intended a fourth Diſcourſe on this Text, to explain the Seventh Head enumerated in the firſt Sermon, but never compoſed it.*

SERMON XVIII.

The Vanity and Uncertainty of human Life.

Preached at the Funeral of Mrs. ELIZABETH MILTON *, *at* Namptwich, *in* Cheſhire, *on* March 10, 1726.

JAMES iv. 14. lat. part.

For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away.

SERM. XVIII.

THIS epiſtle was writ both to the believing and unbelieving *Jews*, to thoſe who had embraced the faith of Chriſt, and thoſe who had not. And, in the beginning of this chapter, the apoſtle ſeems to ſpeak to the latter ſort of *Jews*, who, as *Joſephus* obſerves, were about this time fallen into great contentions, quarrellings and fightings in every

* Third wife, and relict of the Great Author of PARADISE LOST, who conſtantly attended our Author's miniſtry.

ry city, and almoſt in every family, not only in *Judea*, but in other places where they were diſperſed. Hence the apoſtle, taking notice of this their diſorderly carriage, ſays, *From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your luſts*, or pleaſures, *that war in your members? Ye luſt, and have not; ye kill, and deſire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, becauſe ye aſk not; ye aſk and receive not, becauſe ye aſk amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your luſts*, or pleaſures. The *Jews*, at this time, were vehemently deſirous of freedom from paying tribute to the *Romans*, and of dominion and authority over the reſt of the world, agreeable to the notions they had conceived of the Meſſiah, that he ſhould ſet up a temporal kingdom, and bring all nations into ſubjection to them: For the ſake of this worldly deſire, they fell out with all who were not of their mind, they quarrelled, and fought, and even killed, and yet they could not obtain the things they ſo much deſired, becauſe they did not concern themſelves to aſk, or enquire, whether they were agreeable to the mind or will of God: And tho' they aſked, yet they did it from very ill principles, and for bad purpoſes and deſigns, *viz.* that they might conſume it upon their luſts, might make their dominion over the world ſubſervient to their luxury, and the gratification of their vicious luſts and deſires;

SERM. XVIII.

SERM. XVIII.

desires; might live in wealth and plenty, in ease and pleasure, in worldly grandeur, pomp and splendor. Then he speaks to these sensual and worldly-minded persons, as adulterers, and adulteresses; idolatry being frequently represented under the notion of adultery, and this love of the world, and making *mammon* their god, being no better than the heathen idolatry, and as much a departing from God, as appears by what the apostle says in this place; *Ye adulterers, and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.* He goes on, and asks them, *Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?* There being no such expression to be found in the old Testament, some read this verse thus, *Do ye think that the scripture speaketh in vain?* viz. against this sensual and worldly temper; *The spirit*, viz. the spirit of God, *that dwelleth in us, doth he lust unto envy?* making two questions of it. It follows, *But he giveth more grace*, i. e. the spirit of God that dwells in us, is so far from lusting to envy at the good and welfare of others, that he still bestows greater degrees of favour on men: *Wherefore he*, or it, *i. e.* the scripture, *saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace*, or favour, *unto the humble.* Having mentioned this happy privilege of the humble, he

he takes occaſion, in the words immediately following, to exhort them to the virtue of humility, *Submit yourſelves therefore to God*; it follows, *reſiſt the devil, and he will fly from you*, i. e. oppoſe and withſtand his temptations, who is the author and promoter of thoſe envyings and fightings among you, and he ſhall not prevail over you. He proceeds with his exhortations in the 8th *verſe*, *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you: cleanſe your hands, ye ſinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded*, i. e. he would have you draw nigh to God by prayer, repentance, and obedience; or to believe the goſpel, and ſo to draw nigh to God, thro' Jeſus Chriſt, by whom both *Jews* and *Gentiles* have acceſs unto the Father; he would have them cleanſe their hands from violence and injuſtice; and exhorts them who were divided in their affections between God and *mammon*, or the wavering chriſtians who were divided, as it were between *Judaiſm* and chriſtianity, either of which may be underſtood by the δίψυχοι, or double-minded, to purify their hearts from the love of the world, which either hindered them from embracing the goſpel; or tended to draw them off from it. Then, continuing his diſcourſe to the unbelievers and back-ſliders, he ſays, *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heavineſs*, i. e. at the thoughts of the miſery and calamity

SERM. XVIII.

SERM. XVIII.

mity that was coming upon the *Jews*, not only in *Judea*, but in all places where they were ſcattered abroad. Then he exhorts them again, to *humble themſelves in the ſight of the Lord, and he would lift them up.* In the 11th and 12th verſes, he directs his diſcourſe chiefly to the *Jewiſh* chriſtians; *Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that ſpeaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, ſpeaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy: Who art thou then that judgeſt another?* The *Jewiſh* chriſtians were very apt to judge and cenſure the *Gentile* believers for their non-obſervance of the law of *Moſes*, ſaying, that unleſs they were circumciſed, and kept that law, they could not be ſaved: Now, the law never requiring the obſervance of the things contained in it of the *Gentiles*, their cenſuring them for their non-compliance with it, was, in effect, paſſing a cenſure on the law, as if it were faulty, and defective, on that account: And as God never made the commands of the law obligatory to the *Gentiles*, it was preſumption in any to make them ſo, or to pretend, that, without conforming to it, the *Gentiles* could not be ſaved; for God is the only *lawgiver, who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy.* From *ver.* 13. to the end of the *chap.* he ſharply reproves ſuch worldly-minded perſons, as for-

forgetting their own mortality, the uncer- SERM.
tainty of all earthly things, and their neceſ- XVIII.
ſary dependance on the divine providence, were ſo preſumptuous as to reſolve and purpoſe to do ſo, without regard to the divine will, as if life, and the advantages of it, were in their own power, and at their own command. *Go to now, ye that ſay, To day or to-morrow we will go into ſuch a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and ſell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what ſhall be on the morrow: For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away. For that ye ought to ſay, If the Lord will, we ſhall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boaſtings*, viz. concerning the time to come; *all ſuch rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good*, i. e. after theſe warnings and inſtructions he had given them, *and doth it not, to him it is ſin.*

Having thus conſidered the ſcope and connexion of the words of our text, I ſhall now return to the conſideration of them. *For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away.*

Theſe words very emphatically expreſs the vanity of human life. When the apoſtle ſays, *What is your life?* he ſeems to be at a loſs for ſomething vain, empty, and tranſitory enough to compare it to; he preſently likens

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SERM. XVIII. it to a vapour, or gives it that name, *it is even a vapour*. As a vapour riſes ſuddenly, is ſeen but a little while, and then vaniſhes or diſappears, ſuch is the life of men in this world, they enter upon the ſtage, and make a ſhew for ſome time, and then die, go hence, and are no more.

Here it will be proper, *1ſt*, To conſider the certainty of death, or how certain it is that our lives will one time or other have an end. We are not to abide here for ever; there is no fixed or laſting ſtate for us in this world, but the time will come, when death ſhall remove us hence; we carry about with us bodies that are naturally liable to corruption, and muſt, of conſequence, at laſt yield to it; as we cannot ſecure ourſelves from ſickneſs and diſeaſes, ſo it is not in our power to ward off the ſtroke of death, to which all muſt of neceſſity ſubmit. There is nothing we are ſurer of than death, that we muſt one time or other leave this world, and all its enjoyments. As we appear for a while in this world, ſo the time will come, when, like a vapour, we ſhall diſappear, and be no more. Conſtant obſervation, and daily experience, ſhews this to be the lot of all men. How many of our near relations, familiar acquaintance, and deareſt friends, with whom we have intimately converſed, are now removed from our ſight and company, and lodged in the ſilent grave, never to return to

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us more: We are continually hearing of some or other who are taken hence, and ſpectacles of mortality are daily before our eyes, of which we have juſt now had an inſtance; as ſome are always coming into the world, ſo others are daily, and even hourly, departing out of it. Mankind are continually paſſing away by death; this has been their ſtate from the beginning of the world, and will be ſo to the end of it. The longeſt livers have at laſt had an end put to their lives; antediluvian patriarchs, who lived ſo many hundred years, were forced, after all, to ſubmit to death's irreſiſtable power. *One generation paſſeth away, and another generation cometh*, and none muſt expect to continue for ever. Thoſe who have been, now are not; and thoſe who now are, will hereafter have no being in this world. Death is the way of all fleſh, the inevitable portion of all men: As we all became mortal in *Adam*, and it is appointed for all men once to die, ſo there is not a man living who ſhall not ſee death; not one will be able to deliver his ſoul from the hand of the grave, which is the houſe appointed for all living. All ages, degrees, and conditions of men are alike liable to this fate, young and old, learned and unlearned, good and bad, high and low, rich and poor; *One dieth in his full ſtrength, being wholly at eaſe and quiet, his breaſts are full of milk, and his bones are moiſtened with marrow; and another*

SERM. XVIII.

SERM. XVIII.

dieth in the bitterneſs of his ſoul, and never eateth with pleaſure; they ſhall lie down alike in the duſt, and the worms ſhall cover them, Job xxi. 22—26. Death is common to every one; all the living aſſuredly know that they muſt die, and how many years ſoever we live here, we ſhall at laſt go the way of all fleſh, whence we ſhall not return. Thus, as *Job* ſays, *chap.* xiv. 10. *Man dieth, and waſteth away; yea man giveth up the ghoſt, and where is he?* So that, we ſee, every one will ſome time or other have an end put to his life here, and muſt unadvoidably ſubmit to the univerſal conqueror, death. But,

2*dly*, As we muſt certainly one time or other leave this world, and our lives muſt have an end, ſo the life of every one is at longeſt but very ſhort and tranſitory. Our days here are but few, and our time here is but very ſhort; when a few years are come, we ſhall certainly go the way whence we ſhall not return. What are three or fourſcore years, when we ſeriouſly reflect on them? and yet in that ſpace, or thereabouts, all the preſent race of mankind will be certainly extinct. How fleeting and tranſitory a thing then is the life of man, when the utmoſt term of it, generally ſpeaking, does not exceed ſeventy, or eighty years? According as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *The days of our years are threeſcore years and ten; and if by reaſon of ſtrength they be fourſcore years, yet is their*

their ſtrength labour and ſorrow; for it is ſoon cut off, and we flee away. The life of the patriarchs was much longer than ours, and yet theirs was in itſelf but ſhort. How very ſhort therefore is man's life at this time? Thoſe who live longeſt, when they look back on the time they have paſt over, it will appear to them as a dream. As we have no laſting continuance in this world, ſo the time of our continuance here is very ſhort; as we muſt not abide for ever, ſo we cannot abide long in it. As death will certainly come upon us all, ſo it will ſoon come upon us; and as we can by no means entirely eſcape it, ſo it is in vain for us to think of putting it far from us. Our lives paſs on very ſwiftly, and haſten to their final period; every day brings us nearer and nearer to our exit out of this world, and we are continually haſting to our latter end. The brevity and fleeting ſtate of human life is ſet forth in ſcripture after a very affecting manner; as, *Job* xiv. 1, 2. *Man that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble: He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down, he fleeth alſo as a ſhadow, and continueth not.* And, *ver.* 5, *&c.* of the forementioned xcth *Pſal. Thou carrieſt them away as with a flood, they are as aſleep; in the morning they are as graſs which groweth up: In the morning it flouriſheth and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth.* And, *ver.* 9. *For all our days are*

SERM. XVIII.

SERM. XVIII.

paſſed away in thy wrath; we ſpend our years as a tale that is told. Again, *Job* vii. 6, 7. *My days are ſwifter than a weaver's ſhuttle, and are ſpent without hope; O remember that my life is wind.* Chap. viii. 9. *Our days upon earth are a ſhadow.* Chap. ix. 25, 26. *Now my days are ſwifter than a poſt; they flee away, they ſee no good: They are paſſed away as the ſwift ſhips, as the eagle that haſteth to the prey.* 1 Chron. xxix. 15. *Our days on the earth are as a ſhadow, and there is none abiding.* Pſal. xxxix. 4, 5. *Lord, make me to know mine end, and the meaſure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou haſt made my days as an hand-breadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee.* Pſal. ciii. 15, 16. *As for man, his days are as graſs; as a flower of the field ſo he flouriſheth: For the wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof ſhall know it no more.* And, to recite no more, *Pſal.* cxliv. 4. *Man is like to vanity; his days are as a ſhadow that paſſeth away.* So ſhort, ſo fleeting and tranſitory is human life, if we conſider it in the utmoſt extent of it. But,

3*dly*, It is much more ſo, if we conſider the uncertainty of it. As our lives, at longeſt, are very ſhort, ſo they may be much ſhorter than we are willing to imagine; for death does not come upon all at the ſame age, but cuts down perſons of all ages, from the oldeſt to the youngeſt. Nothing is more certain than

than death, but the time of its approach is to us uncertain; whether it may be sooner or later we cannot tell; and it may as well be sooner as later. The days of our years are indeed threescore years and ten, or fourscore years; but, alas! how many are there who do not live out half these days, who are taken off even in the bloom of their years. Our lives are at best but very frail and uncertain; *every man at his best state is altogether vanity*, Psal. xxxix. 5. We cannot promise to ourselves one day, no nor one hour longer to live in this world; not one moment of time is in our power, but it all depends on the divine pleasure. We may indeed bring death upon ourselves much sooner than otherwise it would have come; but, after all our care, we cannot insure the least time to ourselves. How many are there who die suddenly, tho' they were well, and in health, but just before? And we know not but this may be our case. How many unforeseen accidents are there that may bring us to our end? And how many distempers and diseases are we liable to, which may suddenly seize upon us, and end in death? Death assumes innumerable forms and shapes, and has various Ways of assaulting us; sometimes with greater violence and fury, and sometimes more slowly and deliberately, and we shall certainly one time or other be forced to submit to it; but when, or how, we know not.

SERM. XVIII.

SERM. XVIII. not. So very uncertain and precarious is human life, that whatever our present state or condition be, we cannot be sure of the least time to live: Our time is in God's hands, and is known to him alone, and those bounds he has set we cannot pass. In short, we know not how soon, or how suddenly we may be made to yield to the stroke of death; how soon, or how suddenly, our life may have an end; even before we are aware, we may be removed hence, and be no more. Thus then our life is a vapour, which will certainly disappear, will shortly disappear, and may very quickly and suddenly disappear.

Let us now make a few reflections on what has been said.

1st, If our life be so short and uncertain, we may from hence see the vanity of all worldly things. The vanity of life shews the vanity of all enjoyments here. Whenever death comes upon us, as it sends us out of the world, it puts an end to all earthly things with respect to us. As therefore life is short, these things, *viz.* all worldly actions and employments, pleasures and delights, possessions and enjoyments, are but of short continuance, and will soon end; and as our life is uncertain, so these things are very uncertain to us. Indeed they are very uncertain and precarious of themselves, supposing we continued in the world; all earthly riches, honours, and enjoyments are fading and perishing

riſhing things; we may have them to-day, SERM. but may be deprived of them to-morrow; XVIII. they are liable to every accident, and the greateſt uncertainty; they may ſoon paſs away from us, or, however, the pleaſure of enjoying them may ſoon be loſt. But death adds much to the vanity and uncertainty of of them; they can be enjoyed by us no longer than we continue in the world; and how ſhort and uncertain the time of our abode here is, we have already conſidered. Death will put an end to all earthly pleaſures and enjoyments; as we paſs out of the world, theſe things will certainly paſs away from us; we ſhall leave them all behind us, and ſhall never return to them more. Well therefore might the Pſalmiſt ſay, *Surely every man walketh in a vain ſhew; ſurely they are diſquieted in vain, he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who ſhall gather them*, Pſal. xxxix. 6.

2*dly*, If our life in this world be ſo ſhort, and uncertain, how great is the mercy and goodneſs of God in providing for us, and promiſing to us everlaſting life in the world to come. Mankind is naturally deſirous of immortality, but as we are liable to death here, we ſhould all our life-time have been ſubject to bondage, through the fear of it, if God had not provided a remedy againſt this evil and vanity, by ſetting before us a life to come, or an eternal ſtate after a reſur-

SERM. XVIII.

rection. He ſent his Son into the world, *that whoſoever believes in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* Chriſt Jeſus has *brought life and immortality to light by the goſpel*, and has by his death and reſurrection, delivered us from the fear of death, and the bondage of corruption. Though they who believe in him ſhall die, they ſhall not die for ever, but ſhall be raiſed again, and ſhall receive *the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their bodies.* As *we have here no continuing city*, God has provided one for us in the heavenly kingdom; and all ſincere chriſtians may know, that when their *earthly houſe of this tabernacle is diſſolved, they have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands eternal in the heavens.* Bleſſed be God, therefore, who of *his abundant mercy, has begotten us again to a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, which is reſerved in heaven for us.*

3*dly*, If our lives here are ſo ſhort and uncertain, how ought we, with ſpeed, to prepare for our great change by death, and the future ſtate of immortality, happineſs and glory, in the world to come. They who repent not of their ſins here, will be miſerable in the future ſtate; but all ſincere penitents, who do works meet for repentance, will, according to God's gracious promiſe, be

be eternally happy. As, therefore, we can call no time to come our own, and our lives are so uncertain, how ought we to improve the present time for our repentance and turning to God, and to make use of all opportunities in preparing ourselves more and more, by the exercise of virtue, for the blessed and eternal state above. We have but a little time to work in, and this time is very uncertain, and we have a great and most important work to do for our souls; how then should we lay hold on every opportunity, and improve every season for our eternal welfare, and not delay and put off our repentance, and the service of God from one time to another? The time present is the only time we are sure of; let us, therefore, improve this time, for working out our own salvation, lest, if we should not, we should be snatched hence unprepared; for then our state will be most dreadful, and the loss we have brought upon ourselves will be irretrievable. SERM. XVIII.

4thly, If our state here be so fickle and uncertain, then let us set light by the things of this world, by all the pleasures and enjoyments thereof, and let us set our affection on the things above, which are of everlasting continuance. What folly is it for any to set their hearts on that which is so very uncertain and precarious, and which they are sure, in a little time, to leave? *Wilt thou set*

SERM. XVIII.

thine eyes upon that which is not? ſays *Solomon.* If we were to abide here for ever, and were not deſigned for a more excellent ſtate, it would not be ſtrange, that we ſhould ſet our hearts on earthly enjoyments; but ſeeing this is not our reſt, and there is no continuance for us here, we ſhould not ſet our affection upon this periſhing and vain world, ſhould not mind the uncertain enjoyments of it; but ſhould deſire and ſet our hearts upon the felicity of the everlaſting kingdom, and aſpire after thoſe heavenly and divine delights which never ceaſe; we ſhould look upon all the pleaſures, riches and honours of the world, to be vain and empty things, and ſhould learn duly to eſteem and value the ſubſtantial and laſting enjoyments of the heavenly ſtate; ſhould endeavour to be weaned more and more from the one, and to be more deſirous of the other.

5thly, If our time be ſo uncertain, we ſhould, in all worldly buſineſs, purpoſes and reſolutions, have regard to the divine will and diſpoſal; and ſhould ſay, *if the Lord will, we ſhall live, and do this or that*, according to the apoſtle's advice in the context. We ſhould be ſo mindful of our own frailty and mortality, and of the divine power and ſovereignty herein, as not to purpoſe or undertake any thing raſhly, as in our own time and ſtrength, as thoſe did whom

whom the apoſtle here reproves: We ſhould not boaſt ourſelves of to-morrow, ſeeing we know not what ſhall be on the morrow, or what a day may bring forth. SERM. XVIII.

Laſtly, To conclude: Let us be frequently meditating on death, that will certainly be our lot, on the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of life, and the vanity of all worldly things; and let the preſent diſpenſation which occaſioned this diſcourſe, particularly induce us ſo to do. This is a very proper and neceſſary ſubject for our thoughts, and would yield us unſpeakable advantage; ſerious conſideration on the vanity and uncertainty of our preſent ſtate, will put us upon making ſuitable preparation for death, and for the life to come; will tend to diſpoſe the mind to virtue, and to prepare it for thoſe excellent employments, which will yield eternal fruit. Let us, therefore, often meditate on theſe things, not putting far from us the evil day, but ſtill remembering our latter end, that we may be induced ſpeedily to repent, and to exerciſe ourſelves in doing the will of God, in order to the obtaining eternal life and glory in heaven; for though *the world paſſeth away, and the luſt thereof*, and our lives here are as a vapour which ſuddenly diſappears, yet all they who do the will of God, ſhall abide for ever, in the incorruptible manſions of bliſs and glory.

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SERMON XIX.

The Frailty of all Worldly Enjoyments.

1 JOHN ii. 17.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.

SERM. XIX.

DISCOURSES that treat of the vanity, uncertainty and transitory nature of human affairs, of all worldly possessions and enjoyments, can scarce ever be out of season. As daily experience and observation witnesseth to this truth; as the serious consideration of it, and frequent meditations upon it, are necessary to induce us to seek our rest and happiness in another state; and as men generally, notwithstanding, are very thoughtless about it, and appear to have but slight impressions from it, it must, without doubt, be most fit and proper, to take all opportunities to put them in mind of it, to recal their thoughts to most serious contemplations

templations upon it, to shew them how they ought to be affected thereby, and what influence it should always have on their life and conversation. SERM. XIX.

Among all the seasonable warnings and admonitions in the sacred writings, none gives us a more affecting account in general, of the instability and vanity of all worldly things, than the words I have now read to you; which also contain a remedy against this vanity, and show how this unhappiness may be surmounted, and are therefore very proper to be insisted on. But that we may come regularly to them, we must observe, that in the 15*th* verse, the apostle is cautioning christians against an inordinate affection to the things of this life; *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world*; and as a reason of this dehortation, he adds, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*; and, in the following verse, he goes on further to shew, that the inordinate love of the world and the love of God, must needs be inconsistent, forasmuch as these are opposite one to the other; *For all that is in the world*, all that is in vogue and esteem there, *viz. the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*, all intemperance, covetousness and ambition, *is not of the Father, but is of the world.* And then as a further inducement, not to set their affection

on

SERM. XIX. on things on the earth, he adds in the words of the text, *And the world paſſeth away, and the luſt thereof: but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.*

In treating on which words, I ſhall,

I. Conſider the vanity and periſhing nature of all worldly things, from the former part of the verſe, *And the world paſſeth away, and the luſt thereof.*

II. The remedy againſt this vanity, contained in the latter part of the verſe, *But he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.*

I. Let us conſider the tranſitory and periſhing nature of all earthly things, expreſſed in theſe words, *The world paſſeth away, and the luſt thereof.* Though the word world admits of various ſenſes in ſcripture, it is eaſy to ſee, that by theſe expreſſions, is meant, that the ſtate of affairs in this life, is very fleeting and tranſitory, of a decaying and periſhing nature, of a ſhort continuance, and will ſoon end: And we ſhall conſider the firſt of theſe expreſſions in three reſpects. *The world paſſeth away.* 1*ſt*, It is always varying; it is in a conſtant flux and alteration. 2*dly*, It ſo paſſes away, as in time, to have a final period and entire diſſolution. 3*dly*, (which more nearly concerns us) It paſſes away, ſo as to have an end

end with regard to every particular perſon, at his death. SERM. XIX.

1ſt, The world is in continual flux and alteration, and ſo is ſtill paſſing away. It is in a very variable and changeable condition. There is no ſettled and fixed ſtate here, neither with regard to perſons nor things, they are unavoidably ſubject to change, and never continue long the ſame. There is, and has been from the beginning, a conſtant courſe of ſucceſſion of perſons in the world, ſome continually dying, and others coming up in their ſtead. No generation muſt expect to continue for ever, but all muſt, in a few years, ceaſe in their courſe, and leave the earth to the next ſucceeding. Thus thoſe who have been, now are not; they who now are, in a little time, will not be; and they who ſhall ariſe, muſt ſtill undergo the ſame fate, muſt die, and give place to others that come after them. Our fathers are gone, and we are riſen up in their ſtead, and in a ſhort time, we muſt go off the ſtage, and leave it to be acted upon by others. Thus, as the wiſe man ſays, *one generation paſſeth away, and another generation cometh*; ſo it has been from the beginning of the world, and ſo it will be as long as the earth remains. All the preſent inhabitants of the earth, who are now in the world, will in three or four-ſcore years, or a very few more, be certainly extinct, which is a very aweful conſideration,

SERM. XIX.

deration, though so little thought on by us, and a new race will succeed, but for no longer a time than the former; and so on to the end. And as it is thus with regard to men, or persons, so it is with respect to the things of this world: They are all mutable and changeable, and never continue long in one situation; what persons possess to-day, they may be deprived of to-morrow, or in a very short time; they may be rich and at ease at one time, poor and in trouble at another time: Grief often succeeds joy, pain succeeds pleasure, and sickness health; possessions pass from one owner to another, and what one generation has acquired, another generation enjoys. Thus the world is always in a transitory condition, in a continual flux and alteration, and *all that cometh is vanity*.

2*dly*, The world so passeth away, as in time to have a final period and entire dissolution. As now there is a constant succession in the world from generation to generation, so, after a time, there will be an end put even to such succession; and with regard to the present state, mankind will be no more. As the world is ever passing away, in its fluctuating and changeable condition, so hereafter it may be said, that it is actually passed away, there being an end put to the state of affairs here, and all things being entirely dissolved. Thus we read frequently

quently of the end of the world, which, SERM. though it has other ſignifications in ſcripture, XIX. yet ſometimes ſignifies this grand period we are ſpeaking of: When not only the ſtate of things here, the affairs and tranſactions, the works and devices, the pleaſures and enjoyments of this world ſhall have an end, but the earth itſelf, the ſtage whereon theſe things were tranſacted, ſhall undergo a ſurprizing alteration, be removed, and together with its heaven or air, ſhall be diſſolved, and that by fire. This is very plainly declared in ſcripture, 2 *Pet.* iii. 7. *The heavens and the earth which are now, by the ſame word are kept in ſtore, reſerved unto fire againſt the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.* And, verſe 10. *The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, the earth alſo, and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up.* And ſo, ver. 12. *Looking for, and haſting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, ſhall be diſſolved, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat.* And to this purpoſe alſo, is what we read, *Heb.* i. 10, 11, 12. *And thou Lord, in the beginning, haſt laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They ſhall periſh, but thou remaineſt; and they all ſhall wax old, as doth a garment; and as a veſture ſhalt thou*

SERM. XIX. *fold them up, and they ſhall be changed; but thou art the ſame, and thy years fail not.* Thus we ſee that the world ſo paſſeth away, as that at laſt, it ſhall ſuffer a final diſſolution, and an entire period ſhall be put to the preſent ſtate of things. God who made it, can as eaſily deſtroy it, and according to his word, will deſtroy it.

3*dly*, The world paſſeth away ſo as to have an end, with reſpect to every particular perſon at his death. This, as I ſaid, more nearly concerns us, for tho' the world may not be actually at an end in our time, yet death, with regard to us, and every particular perſon, is equivalent to it; for when we die, the world is ended as to us, or any action, concerns, or enjoyments we ſhall have in it again: We ſhall never return to our former poſſeſſions, to our former relations and friends, to our former works and employments, to our former pleaſures and enjoyments, we ſhall never return to them more. We ſhall never act a part more in this world, or in this preſent ſtate of things. When we lie down in our graves, we ſhall not riſe till the heavens be no more; we ſhall not awake, nor be raiſed out of our ſleep: We ſhall not return to our houſe, and the place that knew us ſhall know us no more. Now, that the world paſſeth thus away, daily experience ſhews; there is nothing we are ſurer of than death, conſtant

obſervation proves it to be the lot of every one: As it is appointed unto men once to die, ſo there is not a man living who ſhall not ſee death; none will be able to deliver his ſoul from the grave. Thus the world paſſeth away with regard to every one; for we ſhall all certainly paſs out of it, and leave it behind us. And truly it paſſeth thus away very ſwiftly; every day brings us nearer and nearer to our exit out of it, and we are continually haſting to our latter end. *Our days are but few, and they are ſwifter than a poſt, and flee away; they are paſſed away as the ſwift ſhips, as the eagle haſteth to the prey. Man is like to vanity, and his days are as a ſhadow, that paſſeth away*; in ſuch expreſſions as theſe is the frailty of human life ſet forth in ſcripture. Our lives at longeſt are very ſhort, conſiſting of but very few years: When a few years are come, we ſhall certainly go the way whence we ſhall not return; *for the days of our years are but threeſcore years and ten; and if by reaſon of ſtrength they be fourſcore years, yet is their ſtrength but labour and ſorrow, for it is ſoon cut off, and we flee away.* But how many are there who do not live out half theſe days, who are taken off even in the bloom of their years? For as our lives are ſhort, ſo they are very uncertain, there is not one day, nor hour, of it to come that we can be ſure of. How fleeting and tranſitory, how frail and uncer-

SERM. XIX.

SERM. XIX.

tain is human life, *it is even a vapour, that appeareth for a very little time, and then vaniſheth away.* How many are there who die ſuddenly? and we know not but this may be our lot. How many unforeſeen accidents are there that may bring us to our end? And if not ſo, how many diſeaſes are we liable to, which often may end in death? And this is applicable to every age of man, and to all ranks and conditions: The young die as well as the old; thoſe who are rich and in proſperous circumſtances, as well as the poor and miſerable; kings as well as their ſubjects. For God judgeth thoſe that are high: *One dieth in his full ſtrength*, or in the ſtrength of his perfection, *being wholly at eaſe and quiet*; *his breaſts*, or as it may be read in the original, his milk-pails, *are full of milk, and his bones are moiſtened with marrow* (he has health and proſperity, and yet he dies, all the goods of body and fortune,) *and another dieth in the bitterneſs of his ſoul, and never eateth with pleaſure: They ſhall lie down alike in the duſt, and the worms ſhall cover them*, Job xxi. 22—26. This ſtate of mortality, which all men are alike ſubject to, is very frequently expreſſed and very pathetically complained of in ſcripture, particularly, *Job* xiv. 1, 2. *Man that is born of a woman, is of few days and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth alſo as a ſhadow, and continueth not.*

And,

And, verſe 10. *Man dieth and waſteth away; ye, man giveth up the ghoſt, and where is he?* So, *Pſal.* xxxix. 4, 5. *Lord make me to know mine end, and the meaſure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Behold thou haſt made my days as an hand-breadth, and mine age is nothing before thee: verily every man at his beſt eſtate, is altogether vanity.* Again, *Pſal.* ciii. 15, 16. the Pſalmiſt ſays, *As for man his days are as graſs; as a flower of the field, ſo he flouriſheth: For the wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof ſhall know it no more.* A paſſage like to which, we have, *Iſa.* xl. 6, 7. *All fleſh, i. e.* all men, *is graſs, and all the goodlineſs thereof, is as the flower of the field: The graſs withereth, the flower fadeth; becauſe the ſpirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: ſurely the people is graſs.* Thus we ſee, we are all frail and mortal, and muſt certainly die and leave this world, and that in a little, a very little time; and ſo the world will, in effect, be ended with regard to us, and every particular perſon: So true is this aſſertion of the apoſtle, *The world paſſeth away.*

He adds, *and the luſt thereof.* As the world paſſeth away, ſo the world paſſeth away, ſo as to have an end. By the luſt of the world, we are to underſtand thoſe things which he mentions more particularly in the foregoing verſe, *viz. the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life*; which

SERM. XIX.

are said to be of the world, and so are the same, with what he here calls in general the lust of it. By the lust of the flesh, it seems, we are to understand, all voluptuous enjoyments which tend to sensuality and intemperance; by the lust of the eyes, the desire of riches, of gold and silver, stately houses, splendid furniture, and the like, which tend to gratify the eye; and by the pride of life, the desire of places of dignity, high titles, all the honour, glory and splendor of the world, which tends to gratify our pride and ambition. These are all fading and perishing things, and will soon pass away; both the things that are lusted after, or minister to our lusts, and the lusts themselves, the pleasure that is taken in the possession and enjoyment of such things. 1. The things that minister to our lusts, or are lusted after, are all transitory, decaying and perishing things; such as the riches, honours and pleasures of the world, and the like; these are all very precarious, and will, in a very short time, certainly leave us, these things which are seen, are but temporal: We must not expect to enjoy them always, for daily experience shows, how vain, fickle and uncertain they are. As for riches, they are not for ever, they are deservedly called uncertain riches, they make themselves wings, and flee away as an eagle towards heaven, as the wise man expresses it: As for honours, those who

who enjoy them ſtand in ſlippery places; *Man being in honour, abideth not:* And as for the objects that gratify our carnal and ſenſual appetites, they are fading and periſhing things. And then, 2. As the things that are luſted after in this world, are vain and tranſitory, ſo the pleaſure that is taken in the enjoyment of them, is tranſitory too, and very ſhort-lived: When the things that miniſter to our luſts ceaſe, the pleaſure taken from the gratification of them muſt ceaſe of courſe. And this may be while we live; the pleaſures, honours and enjoyments of this world may leave us before we leave it; we can be ſecure of nothing here, though we remain in the world; thoſe who are rich, and live in all honour and pleaſure, may live to be poor and deſpiſed, and miſerable; men often outlive their wealth, their honours, and their delights; but if theſe ſhould continue as long as they live, they may be rendered altogether uncapable of enjoying them, or receiving any pleaſure from them. They are none of them a ſecurity againſt pain and ſickneſs, which blunt the edge of all delights, and ſpoil their reliſh; and ſo grief, trouble and anxiety, often ſucceed ſenſual pleaſure and voluptuous enjoyments. But however, this is certain, that the things of the world can be enjoyed by us no longer than we continue in it; and how ſhort and uncertain the time of our

SERM. XIX.

SERM. XIX.

abode here is, we have already considered. Death will put an end to all earthly pleasures and enjoyments; as we pass out of the world, these things will certainly pass away from us: We shall leave them all behind us, and shall never return to them more. Well, therefore, might the Psalmist say, *Surely every man walketh in a vain shew; Surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them*, Psalm xxxix. 6. And very observable to this purpose, is what he elsewhere says, *Psalm* xlix. 10. *Wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.* And a little lower, verse 16, 17. *Be not thou afraid, when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased: For when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him.* And the apostle says, *We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out*, 1 Tim. vi. 7. Thus we see that *the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.*

II. I come now to consider the latter part of the verse, which containeth a remedy against this vanity, or shews us how we may surmount it; *but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.* And here I shall consider, *1st*, The persons; *they that do the will of God.* *2dly*, Their happiness and privilege; *they abide for ever.*

1. As

1. As to the perſons, who are they that do the will of God? They who do the will of God, are ſuch as do what he requires of them, for his will is often put for what he will have us to perform. Now, this will of God is expreſſed and declared two ways; by the light of nature, and in the holy ſcriptures. *1ſt*, The will of God as to what he would have us perform and do, is expreſſed by the light of nature. Our reaſon may diſcover, and that very eaſily, in many reſpects, what our Creator requires of us: As it teaches us that he is perfectly good, and juſt, and holy, ſo it will naturally infer, that he requires us, his creatures, to follow, according to our capacities, what is agreeable to theſe perfections; and will, upon ſerious reflection, inform us what more particularly comes under theſe characters, according to our ſeveral conditions and relations. It will teach us what is good, and what is evil, what is juſt, and what is unjuſt, what is vice, and to be avoided, and what is virtue, and to be followed, in moſt particular inſtances, if we carefully attend to it, and make uſe of it; and whatever right and unprejudiced reaſon ſhall ſuggeſt to us in this matter, is the will of God; and it is eaſy to ſee when our reaſon is prejudiced by any previous paſſion. But then, *2dly*, The will of God is declared in his holy word. This contains and makes known whatever he requires of us. Some

SERM. XIX.

SERM. XIX.

things are expreſly ſaid in ſcripture to be the will of God; as juſtice, mercy and piety, *Micah* vi. 8. *He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* So holineſs, purity and ſobriety is the will of God, 1 *Theſ.* iv. 3. *For this is the will of God, even your ſanctification, that ye ſhould abſtain from fornication.* And it is the will of God that we praiſe him and give thanks unto him, *chap.* v. 18. *In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Chriſt Jeſus concerning you.* And, 1 *Pet.* ii. 15. the apoſtle ſays, *For ſo is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men.* But, beſides this, every particular precept, or command in the holy ſcripture is expreſſive of the divine will, and ſhews what God requires of us. Thus then thoſe who do the will of God, are ſuch as ſincerely conform to what he has enjoin'd, both by the light of nature, and in his holy word. They are ſuch as endeavour to form juſt notions of their duty, and to practice accordingly. They follow the free and impartial dictates of right reaſon, with regard to what they ſhould do, and what they ſhould avoid. They conſider what is agreeable to the nature of things, and to the ſeveral relations they ſtand in, and make that the rule of their converſation. Further, they are ſuch as conform to what he

he requires in his word, who make that the rule of their actions, and endeavour to obey all the divine commands therein delivered; who avoid and abstain from whatever he has forbidden, and sincerely comply with what he has made their duty. More particularly, they are such who *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously and godly in the world*; they forsake sin, and follow after holiness. They worship God in sincerity, and make conscience of performing all the duties of religion; they preserve a due reverence for his supreme majesty, and pay all homage and adoration to him; they pray to him, and praise his holy name, and give him humble and hearty thanks for all his mercies and favours. They also sincerely perform the duties they owe to their neighbour; they love their neighbour as themselves; they abstain from all unjust and unrighteous actions, and maintain justice and equity in all their dealings; they are of a kind and good disposition, and exercise works of charity and mercy; they are so far from injuring any, that they sincerely desire the true welfare of all, and sincerely endeavour to do to others, as they would have others to do to them. And then, as to the government of themselves, they maintain temperance and sobriety, humility and patience, contentedness and moderation in the use of all worldly things; they abstain from all impurity and excess, preserve

SERM. XIX.

SERM. XIX. preſerve a holy converſation, ſet their affection on things above, and not on things on the earth. Thus we ſee who they are that do the will of God, *viz.* ſuch as obey his commandments, and ſerve him in holineſs and righteouſneſs. But let it be obſerved, that we ſhould do this will of God from the heart; we ſhould be ſincere in it, ſhould be conſtant in it; ſhould oppoſe the cuſtoms and examples of the world for the ſake of it, and ſhould let no worldly conſideration whatſoever, no reproach or perſecution turn us aſide from it.

2. We come now to conſider the happineſs and privilege of ſuch perſons, *they abide for ever: He that doth the will of God, abideth for ever*, or, ſhall abide for ever. This is put in oppoſition to the world's paſſing away. Tho' the world, and all worldly things are tranſitory and fading, and will have an end, and worldly men, who mind nothing but this world, ſhall periſh, yet he who ſincerely obeys God, and does his will, ſhall endure for ever. But how do thoſe who do God's will abide for ever? Do they not die, and leave this world as well as other men? True, they do ſo; but tho' they abide not here for ever, they ſhall live for ever in the world to come; they ſhall riſe again, and that to immortality. All men indeed ſhall riſe again, and be reſtored to life; but the wicked ſhall riſe, only to be condemned to a ſecond death

death, to be punished with everlasting de- SERM.
struction; whilst the righteous, or those who XIX.
do the will of God, shall rise again to life eternal. This happy state was purchased by Christ, and revealed by him, *he brought life and immortality to light thro' the gospel*; and it is all along declared to belong to such as sincerely do what God requires of them, and to such only *eternal life is indeed the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord*; but it is given only to such as *have their fruit unto holiness*. See *Matt.* vii. 21. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven*, (he shall enter into the heavenly kingdom.) So, *Matt.* xxv. ult. *These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.* And to the same purpose is that, *John* v. 28, 29. —*The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.* And so we read, *Rom.* ii. 6, 7. your God, *Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality; eternal life.* Thus they who do the will of God shall abide for ever in heaven, *shall have everlasting life*, and *shall obtain an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and*

SERM. XIX.

that fadeth not away. They ſhall not be ſubject to the vanity and death as they were in this tranſitory world; but *having obtained the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their bodies,* by a reſurrection, they ſhall triumph over death, ſhall live for ever, and ſhall enjoy a bleſſed immortality. I ſay, a bleſſed immortality; for as they ſhall abide for ever, ſo all good things will abide with them for ever; as they ſhall live for ever, ſo they ſhall be for ever happy: Evil and trouble ſhall never come near them, they ſhall be continually free from pain, anxiety and ſorrow; eternal reſt and peace ſhall be their portion, and perfect joy and felicity ſhall ever attend them. They ſhall have a crown of glory that fadeth not away, ſhall perpetually ſolace themſelves with the various delights of the heavenly kingdom, and ſhall be eternally happy in the preſence of God, *in which there is fulneſs of joy, and at whoſe right-hand there are pleaſures for evermore.*

Thus have we briefly conſidered theſe words of the apoſtle, and ſhall now conclude with a word or two of application.

1. Hence we ſee what folly it is to ſet our hearts on worldly things. We have heard how tranſitory and uncertain theſe things are, and how ſoon they have an end; *the world paſſeth away, and the luſt thereof*; all the riches, honours and enjoyments of this world are fading and periſhing things; we may have them

them to-day, but may be deprived of them to-morrow; they are liable to every accident, and the greateſt uncertainty; they may ſoon paſs away from us, or, however, the pleaſure of enjoying them may ſoon be loſt. Thus uncertain and tranſitory are the things of this world, even ſuppoſe we continue in it; and therefore, if we go no farther, it would be great folly and imprudence to ſet our minds too much upon them. But this is not all; for earthly things are not only in themſelves of a tranſitory and periſhing nature, but, when death comes upon us, we are ſure to leave them all; and, as it is moſt certain that we muſt all die, and that in a very little time at furtheſt, ſo we know not but we may die much ſooner; our lives are at beſt but very uncertain, and we may even ſuddenly be ſnatched from all our enjoyments here. And this makes it the height of folly and madneſs for any one to pleaſe himſelf overmuch with ſuch things, eſpecially if we conſider that a certain ſtate of felicity is ſet before us in the world to come. And yet how many are there, how many that profeſs ſtrict chriſtianity are there, whoſe actions diſcover that their affections are inordinately ſet on worldly things, and that they place their happineſs too much on the enjoyment of them? Elſe, what means all their immoderate purſuits after them, their exceſſive joy in the poſſeſſion of them, and their exceſſive grief

SERM. XIX.

grief when they are deprived of them? I say, excessive; for to be moderately affected with these things, is certainly lawful. Moderate and due care about the things of this life is very requisite and commendable, and is certainly our duty; but when any one goes so far in the pursuit of them as to neglect things of higher concern, and places all his happiness in these perishing things, he is certainly guilty of a great folly and crime. What folly is it for us to set our hearts on that which is so very uncertain, and which we are sure in a little time to leave? If we do thus, as the apprehensions of parting from it will make us still uneasy in the possession of it, so the certain loss of it, at last, will fill our minds with immoderate grief and anxiety, and we shall have nothing beyond it to raise our expectations to.

2. We may here see the excellency of true religion. This provides a remedy against all the inconstancy and vanity of earthly things: *The world passeth away, and the lust thereof*, worldly men, who mind nothing but the world, shall perish, together with their lusts; *but he that doth the will of God*, he that sincerely addicts himself to a pious, holy and righteous course of life, and endeavours to obey all God's commandments, *he shall abide for ever*, shall have everlasting life, and a blessed and glorious immortality. God has graciously promised this to such persons, and they

they ſhall certainly enjoy it. And the excel- SERM.
lency of true religion will yet further appear, XIX.
if we conſider, that as thoſe who practiſe it
ſhall certainly be for ever happy in heaven, ſo they may have ſuch a bleſſed hope and true proſpect of it, as will bear them up amidſt all the troubles of this life; they may ſo rejoice in hope of the glory of God, as that no affliction ſhall caſt them down, no evil ſhall terrify them; but, having their firm truſt in God, and the comfortable expectation of future bliſs, they ſhall never be moved, but may be eaſy in the hands of divine providence, in the midſt of the greateſt publick afflictions, calamities and deſolations.

3. To conclude therefore; let us be induced to ſet light by the things of this world, and, by the exerciſe of religion and virtue, to ſeek a more fixed and ſettled ſtate of happineſs in the world to come. Let us not ſet our affection on earthly things, ſeeing they are ſo vain, tranſitory and periſhing; but ſince a durable ſtate of felicity is propoſed to us, let us raiſe our minds to that, and, by doing the will of God, endeavour to obtain it: Let us ſet our affections on things above, and in the way of our duty ſeek them; in the way of our duty, I ſay, *for without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* Let us do the will of God from the heart, ſeeing ſo great a reward is promiſed to them that do it. Let us devote ourſelves ſincerely to his ſervice, and make con-

SERM. XIX.

conſcience of obeying all his commandments; let us follow after righteouſneſs and holineſs, charity and ſobriety, and have *our converſation as becomes the goſpel of Chriſt*; and let us perſiſt in this courſe, notwithſtanding all oppoſition; and if we have in any reſpect deviated from it, let us return to it again. If we thus do we ſhall not only have our hearts fixed, truſting in God here, but ſhall be eternally happy in the world to come; we ſhall unterrified behold the heavens and the earth on fire, when all the wicked ſhall be deſtroyed; ſhall be preſerved from the diſmal effects of this conflagration, and ſhall be for ever with the Lord, in the enjoyment of conſummate bliſs and happineſs.

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SERMON XX.

Proofs of the Reſurrection and Final Judgment.

ACTS xvii. 31.

Becauſe he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.

SERM. XX.

THESE words are part of that excellent ſpeech, which the apoſtle *Paul* made to the men of *Athens*, a famous and learned city of *Greece*. He being ſent forth by the Holy Ghoſt, had preached the goſpel in many towns and cities, and converted many to the faith, and then returned to *Antioch*, from whence he was firſt ſent out; and after ſome time, he determined to go again, and viſit the brethren in every city, where he had preached the word of the Lord; and paſſing through many places, he, at length, came to *Theſſalonica*, where he

SERM. XX.

preached the gospel to the *Jews*, as his manner was, wherever he came, to preach the word first to them. By his preaching, some were induced to believe, but those who believed not, made a great disturbance in the city upon his account, and raised a tumult against him, and *Silas* his companion. Hereupon, the brethren immediately sent them away by night unto *Berea*; and when they were come thither, they preached there also in the synagogue of the *Jews*, and converted many. *But when the Jews of Thessalonica, had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people; and then immediately the brethren sent away Paul, to go as it were to the sea. And they that conducted him brought him to Athens*, where, whilst he waited for *Silas* and *Timotheus*, *his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry*, which put him upon disputing in the synagogue with the *Jews*, and with the devout persons, and with them that met with him. Whereupon certain of the *Epicureans* and *Stoicks* encountered him, and brought him to *Areopagus*, and demanded of him an account of his doctrine. Then the apostle, in a very excellent speech, declares to them, him whom they ignorantly worshipped, reproves their superstition and idolatry, and, at last, tells them, that though God had, indeed, winked at those

thoſe times of ignorance, yet now he com- SERM.
mands all men every where to repent, *Be-* XX.
cauſe he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.

That there is a judgment to come, may be gathered from the conſideration of the juſtice of God, as alſo of his goodneſs. We can have no notion of a ſupreme Being, without conceiving, at the ſame time, that he is perfectly juſt and righteous, and perfectly good; and as he is ſuch an one, he muſt be alſo a lover of righteouſneſs and goodneſs, wherever it is found, and muſt conſtantly hate what is contrary to it; and conſequently that he will not acquit and reward the wicked, the obſtinate and refractory tranſgreſſors of his laws, and condemn and puniſh the good and righteous, thoſe who turn to him, and ſincerely endeavour to obey his commandments; or that he will not ſuffer perſons of ſo different diſpoſitions and behaviour, to go always undiſtinguiſhed, without putting any difference between them, by ſhewing his indignation againſt the wicked, and giving tokens and pledges of his love and favour to the righteous: But where do we find this difference made in this life? Are not the righteous ſubject to as many troubles, calamities and afflictions as the wicked? And

SERM. XX.

do not the wicked enjoy as much eaſe and proſperity as the righteous? So that, as the wiſe man ſays, *No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. For all things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; and as is the good, ſo is the ſinner*, Eccleſ. ix. 1, 2. Some good men, do indeed, live proſperouſly and happily here; but then may we not obſerve as many of the wicked and ungodly ſo living? and many wicked men are afflicted and diſtreſſed, but are there not as many righteous in the ſame circumſtances? Yea, it is commonly ſeen that the righteous are moſtly afflicted and troubled, and the wicked moſtly enjoy eaſe and pleaſure, and a proſperous ſtate of affairs; *Their ſtrength is firm*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *they are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men.* For the righteous are not only liable to more common calamities than the wicked, but are alſo very frequently much perſecuted, injured and diſtreſſed by them. Now this being conſidered, it is plain, that if God be juſt and righteous, if he has a regard to his own honour, as governor and lawgiver, and to the good of the whole order of beings under his government: If he be good, and muſt needs love them who ſincerely love and obey him, and have a juſt regard for his honour and authority; if God be ſuch an one,

one, I ſay, as he certainly is, it is plain, SERM. that ſeeing the courſe of affairs in this world, XX. is ſo uncertain, as that we cannot by it, diſcern between the good and the bad; and if we conſider it in itſelf, there is ſuch an unequal diſtribution of proſperity and adverſity here, that the good are moſtly afflicted, while the evil are commonly in a flouriſhing condition; there muſt be a time of retribution after this life, when all ſhall give an account to their Creator, and be rewarded according to their works: When a manifeſt diſcrimination ſhall be made between the juſt and unjuſt, when the wicked ſhall no more be happy, nor the good miſerable; but theſe be rewarded, and the others juſtly puniſhed.

But as the future judgment may thus be proved by reaſon, from the conſideration of the juſtice and equity of the divine Being, together with the unequal diſtribution of affairs in this life, ſo it is frequently expreſſed and aſſerted in the divine revelation. This judgment was ſpoke of in very early times of the world, by *Enoch* the ſeventh from *Adam*, who propheſied, ſaying, *Behold the Lord cometh with ten thouſand of his ſaints, to execute judgment upon all,* &c. *Jude* 14, 15. It is ſpoken of by the wiſe man, and there are many hints of it in the prophets: But in the new Teſtament, it is moſt clearly and expreſsly aſſerted, and often laid down as a main article of the chriſtian

SERM. XX.

faith, and a moſt important truth. Our Saviour often ſpeaks of it in a very ſolemn manner, and gives us ſome deſcription of it, *Matt.* xxv. 31. to the end. The reſurrection of the dead and the eternal judgment, are reckoned by the apoſtle, two of the firſt principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, *Heb.* vi. 2. and, accordingly, all the apoſtles in their preaching, inſiſted very much upon this, as the apoſtle *Paul* does in this his ſpeech to the heathen, telling them, that God had *appointed a day in the which he would judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he had ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in raiſing him from the dead.*

Here we have, in the firſt place, the ſupreme Author of this judgment, to wit, God; it is God, who has appointed the time for this judgment; and our Saviour tells us, he had reſerved the knowledge of this time to himſelf, *Matt.* xxiv. 36. *But of that day and hour* (or time) *knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but my Father only.* It is he who has ordained the perſon, who is to be his repreſentative in this judgment, and he, at the time appointed, will judge the world by this perſon. Thus God is the ſupreme judge of the world; he will judge men by Jeſus Chriſt. The apoſtle calls him the judge of all, *Heb.* xii. 32. *To God the judge of all.* And the Father

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is said *to judge according to every man's work*, 1 *Pet.* i. 17. As God is our supreme creator, our supreme lawgiver and governor, so he will be our supreme judge; the judgment to come, is ordained and decreed by him, and will be managed and executed by his authority; and as he has an original right to be our judge, so he has originally in himself, all perfections necessary for such judgment. He is omniscient, he knows all things; he is acquainted with all our ways; beholds all, even our most secret actions, and knows the very thoughts and designs of our heart: *He searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:* He is almighty; has power and authority; is able to bring all men before him, and to execute on them whatever his just judgment shall determine: He is perfectly just and righteous; he has no respect to persons, and so will impartially reward every one according to his works. SERM. XX.

In the next place, we are to consider the person whom God has ordained to be the immediate judge of the word. *He has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world, by that man whom he hath ordained.* This person by whom God will judge the world, is Jesus Christ our Saviour, who came into the world, and suffered, and died

SERM. XX.

for it. Though God be the ſupreme judge of all men, yet he will not judge them immediately, but by his Son Jeſus Chriſt; hence this work of judging the world, is often aſcribed to Chriſt in the goſpel, he being appointed and conſtituted the immediate judge of it: Hence we are told by our Saviour, that *the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and hath given him authority to execute judgment*, John v. 22,—27. And the apoſtle *Peter*, Acts x. 42. ſays, that *they were commanded to preach unto the people, and to teſtify, that it was he*, that is, Chriſt, *who was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead.* As he is our lawgiver and governor, as God has made him both Lord and Chriſt, and has *exalted him at his right-hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour*, ſo it is very agreeable, that he ſhould alſo be conſtituted our Judge; as he humbled himſelf for our ſakes, and came into the world to procure for us, and offer to us the terms of ſalvation; ſo is it requiſite that he ſhould be authoriſed to determine our ſtate at laſt, according as we have behaved ourſelves here, and have complied with, or rejected theſe terms; and as this judgment, this great work of judging the world, is committed to Chriſt, ſo he is every way fitted and qualified for this vaſt undertaking; he has all manner of abilities that are neceſſary for the diſcharge of ſo important

portant an office; his wiſdom and knowledge, his power, his juſtice, equity and impartiality render him every way capable of it; he has all power given to him in heaven and on earth; he can ſearch the reins and the heart, and ſo will judge, not according to outward appearance, but by the heart; he will examine into the ſecret ſprings and motives of action, will weigh every circumſtance of them, and will judge accordingly; he will judge with equity and impartiality; he will not reſpect the perſon of any; of the proud, or rich, or honourable, nor of the poor and low, and deſpiſed; it is impoſſible he ſhould be impoſed on; no bribes will corrupt him; he will, by no means, be induced to do unrighteouſneſs in judgment: Thus, as Chriſt is ordained to this high office, ſo he is every way a fit perſon for it. And when the time comes for him to execute it, he will come in great glory, in heavenly pomp and ſplendor; he will come in his Father's glory, in his own glory, and will have the glorious company of the heavenly hoſts for his attendants, *Matt.* xxv. 31. *When the Son of man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſet upon the throne of his glory. The Lord himſelf*, ſays the apoſtle, *ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God:* He *ſhall be revealed from heaven with* SERM. XX.

SERM. XX. *with his mighty angels, in flaming fire.* This is his ſecond coming, ſo often ſpoken of in the new Teſtament. Though his firſt coming was in a mean and low condition; this his appearing will be in the greateſt glory and majeſty. Thus have we ſeen who is ordained of God to be judge in this great day.

In the next place, let us conſider the perſons to be judged, which are all the world. *God has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world, i. e.* all men, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, noble and ignoble, and even every individual of every age and nation. In this judgment, every man ſhall be rewarded acccording to his works: At this great day, *all nations ſhall be gathered before the Son of man to be judged*, Matt. xxv. 32. The apoſtle ſays, *We ſhall all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, and every one of us, ſhall give account of himſelf to God.* No perſon will be excepted; none will be excuſed; none will be ſo mean, as not to be then taken notice of, how obſcurely ſoever they lived here; they will not then lie hid, but will be diſcovered and brought to judgment; none will be ſo great, ſo rich, or ſo potent, as to be able to eſcape this impartial trial; but the rich, the mighty, and the honourable, the kings and princes, and judges of the earth, will all be ſummoned to this awful tribunal. Finally, all, of whatſoever rank, ſtation

ſtation or condition in this world, of whatſo- SERM.
ever nation, party, or perſuaſion, both *Jews* and XX.
Gentiles, bond and free, good and bad, ſhall
ſtand before Chriſt, to be judged in this great day. Again, the perſons to be judged, are ſaid to be the quick and the dead; Chriſt is ordained of God, to be the Judge of quick and dead, 2 *Tim.* iv. 1. *I charge thee therefore, before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom.* 1 Pet. iv. 5. *Who ſhall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.* Some will be alive at the coming of Chriſt, and thoſe ſhall all be judged; and beſides all the dead, all that have died from the beginning of the world, to that time, will alſo be brought to judgment; and to this end, they muſt riſe again, they muſt come forth of their graves, and be reſtored to life. The reſurrection, muſt of neceſſity, precede the laſt judgment: Hence the apoſtle, in his enumeration of the firſt principles of the chriſtian doctrine, places it before it, *Of reſurrection of the dead, and of the eternal judgment.* And *John*, in his viſion of this ſolemn tranſaction, ſays, *The ſea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell, i. e.* the grave, *delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works*, Rev. xx. 13. After they are raiſed, they ſhall, together with thoſe who were alive at Chriſt's coming

SERM. XX. coming, be brought in a ſolemn manner before his tribunal, and be made to appear there, 2 *Cor.* v. 10. *For we muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt.*

The things for which we muſt be judged, are all things with regard to our behaviour here in this life: We muſt appear before Chriſt's tribunal, that *every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

1*ſt*, We muſt give an account of all our actions, of all that we have done and tranſacted here. Some addict themſelves to the practice of good works, to holy and religious actions, and to charitable and righteous deeds, and others to the practice of thoſe things that are wicked and unlawful. Now an account will be required of us in the day of judgment, of what kind our actions are, whether they be good or evil, that we may be rewarded or puniſhed accordingly. Thus *Enoch* propheſied, that the Lord would come *to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodlily committed.* And we ſhall be judged, not only for thoſe deeds that are more open and manifeſt, but alſo for our moſt ſecret actions, that come not within the obſervation of our fellow creatures, *Eccleſ.* xii. 14. *For God ſhall bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

2*dly*,

SERM. XX.

2*dly*, We ſhall give an account of our words. Men are apt to make very light of their words, eſpecially thoſe that are ſpoken in a jeſting and merry way, but it is certain, that by our words, we may do a great deal of good, or a great deal of hurt; and that ill words ſpoken in jeſt, may be very pernicious and deſtructive of piety and virtue, and therefore, it is reaſonable, that we ſhould be judged even for our words; as our Saviour tells us we ſhall, *Matt.* xii. 36, 37. *But I ſay unto you, that for every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the day of judgment: For by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned.* By idle words, we are not to underſtand all words that do not immediately tend to the good and edification of others, but falſe or ſlanderous, or ſuch like wicked words, that tend to the hurt, injury and defamation of others; and it is reaſonable we ſhould give an account of ſuch words as theſe. *Enoch* ſays, *The Lord cometh to convince men of all their hard ſpeeches, which they have ſpoken againſt him*, as well as *of all their ungodly deeds.*

3*dly*, We ſhall give an account in the day of judgment, of the ſecret deſigns, purpoſes and intentions of the heart; perſons may have very bad intentions, and yet may never be able to accompliſh their wicked deſigns; but nevertheleſs, they are as guilty in the ſight of

SERM. XX. of God, who ſearcheth the heart, as if they had actually perpetrated the evil deſigned by them, and ſhall be judged accordingly; yea, oftentimes, a very bad deſign lies hid under a good action; and this will by no means prevent a perſon that has ſuch an ill intention, from being accountable for it: God will judge even the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt. See alſo what the apoſtle ſays, 1 *Cor.* iv. 5. *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts.*

4*thly*, We ſhall alſo give an account for our omiſſion of duties, or the neglect of thoſe things that God requires of us: It is certainly a ſin to neglect what God has commanded, as well as to do what he has forbid: As therefore, the omiſſion of duties makes us criminal, we ſhall, without doubt, be judged for it. Thus in our Saviour's deſcription of the laſt judgment, *Matt.* xxv. he aſſigns the omiſſion of what thoſe perſons ought to have done, as the reaſon of their condemnation, verſe 42, 43. *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; ſick and in priſon, and ye viſited me not.*

In the next place, let us take notice, that the apoſtle ſays, *God will judge the world in righteouſneſs.*

righteouſneſs. There is no doubt, but this judge of all the earth will do right; and this he will do in this great day, by aſſigning every one his portion of happineſs or miſery, according to his works; he will, without reſpect of perſons, judge according to every man's work; and will reward them according to it; he will reward them according to the nature or quality of their works, as they are good or bad, by giving eternal life and happineſs to the righteous, and inflicting miſery and eternal death on the wicked; he will reward them according to the degrees of their works, by beſtowing a greater degree of happineſs upon thoſe who have excelled in goodneſs and piety, and rendering them more miſerable, who have been more wicked. Where there is an honeſt mind and good diſpoſition, he will make all reaſonable allowances for frailty, infirmity and temptation, and he will have no regard to a fair outward appearance, where ſincerity and an upright mind is wanting. He will judge equitably according to the ſeveral circumſtances and conditions of men, and the different advantages that they enjoy. Thus our Saviour declares, that it ſhall be more tolerable for *Tyre* and *Sidon*, and for the land of *Sodom*, in the day of judgment, than for *Chorazin*, *Bethſaida* and *Capernaum*, who had the advantages of his preaching and miracles. Finally, God will judge men by the diſpen-

SERM. XX.

SERM. XX. ſation they were under; he will not judge thoſe by the law, who were never under the law; neither will he judge them by the goſpel, who never heard of it: But as the apoſtle ſays, *As many as have ſinned without law, ſhall alſo periſh without law; and as many as have ſinned in the law, ſhall be judged by the law:* And I may add, what is agreeable to reaſon and the goſpel, that as many as have ſinned under the goſpel, or having the goſpel, ſhall be judged by the goſpel. Thus will God *judge the world in righteouſneſs by the man whom he hath ordained.*

The apoſtle adds, *Whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.* The reſurrection of Chriſt is a ſufficient confirmation of this truth, that God will judge the world in righteouſneſs by him. For, 1*ſt*, His reſurrection is the pledge of ours, and what ſhould we riſe again for but to be judged? God has ſhewn his power in raiſing Chriſt from the dead; and the ſame power is able alſo to raiſe us, and by the reſurrection of Chriſt, it appears that our reſurrection is deſigned. But, 2*dly*, The reſurrection of Chriſt is a confirmation of his whole doctrine, and the judgment to come being a chief part of his doctrine, it muſt be a confirmation of this in particular: Our Saviour often inſiſted on this judgment, and told his diſciples, that he was ordained of God, to be the judge of the world; and God by raiſing

him from the dead, confirmed this doctrine, and ſhewed that what he ſaid was true. SERM. XX.

Thus have I conſidered theſe words, and ſhall now conclude with a brief exhortation.

Let us often meditate on the day of judgment; let us by the conſideration of it, be induced to repent of our ſins and turn to God, and to keep a ſtrict watch over all our actions. Let us often meditate on the day of judgment, this is a very awful ſubject, and of very great concernment to us all, it being by this judgment, that our whole future ſtate will be determined and fixed certainly; therefore, we ſhould allow it a chief place in our thoughts. Shall the light of nature teach us in part, that God will call all men to an account? And ſhall the chriſtian revelation, ſo abundantly confirmed by miracles, moſt expreſsly and frequently inſiſt upon it, as a matter of the laſt importance? Shall God give us full aſſurance of the certainty of it, by raiſing Chriſt from the dead? And ſhall not we think it a matter worthy our moſt ſerious meditation? Certainly as death, ſo the judgment to come, is a very awful thing, and ſhould frequently be remembered and thought on by us. And we ſhould be induced thereby to repent of our ſins, and to turn to God. The apoſtle ſays, God now *commands men every where to repent, becauſe he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world*

SERM. XX.

in righteousness. Certainly then the consideration of this judgment should be an inducement to us to repent; in this judgment God will reward every one according to his works; if therefore, we persist in a course of sin and disobedience to his laws, what sentence can we expect to have passed on us, but this dreadful one, *Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*. But if we repent and have our fruit unto holiness, we shall hear that joyful sentence, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world*. Let us also, by the consideration of this judgment, be induced to keep a strict watch over all our ways; and be careful how we speak, act, or design; if *God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing*, how careful should we be that all our actions may be agreeable to his law, and such as will be approved by him; if we must *give account of every idle word in the day of judgment*, how should we take care that *we sin not with our tongue*; that we lie not one to another; that we are not guilty of slandering or backbiting our neighbour; and that none of our expressions, not even those that are spoken in jest and for diversion, may offend against charity, purity and true religion: As God knows the very thoughts and designs of our heart, and

and will call us to an account for them; let us maintain ſincerity and uprightneſs there. *For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things:* But if our heart condemn us not, we may have boldneſs in the day of judgment, ſhall have confidence towards God, and ſhall aſſure our hearts before him. SERM. XX.

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A

SERMON

preached at BARBICAN

in LONDON,

Feb. 9. M.DCC.LV.

on occaſion of the death of the reverend

Mr. ISAAC KIMBER.

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M.DCC.LV.

1 Cor. XV. 58.

Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; foraſmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

THE verſe immediately preceding this text contains one of the practical improvements of the doctrine of a happy reſurrection of the faithful: which is, their obligation to be thankful to God, who through Jeſus Chriſt gives them the victory over death, conſidered as the conſequence of ſin. The words which I have now read contain another practical improvement of the ſame doctrine: and ſignify; that ſince the bleſſed God has through Jeſus Chriſt provided for our conqueſt over ſin, and over death which is the wages of it, and has ſecured a reſurrection to

a happy immortality for all thoſe who follow the directions of Chriſt's holy goſpel; they who profeſs to be his diſciples ought to go on with a *ſteady, unmoveable* reſolution of mind, in all that courſe of duty which the goſpel preſcribes; and ſhould *abound* in all that *work* which it requires, notwithſtanding any difficulties which may attend it; becauſe they could not fail of ſeeing, that a reſurrection to an eternal life of complete felicity would abundantly compenſate all the difficulties, whatſoever they were, which in this ſhort life they might ſuffer in the courſe of their duty.

This I take to be the true connexion and general view of the words, which I propoſe to conſider more particularly. Some indeed ſeem to be of opinion; that, when the apoſtle exhorts the Corinthian chriſtians *to be ſtedfaſt and unmoveable*, he exhorts them to be ſtedfaſt and unmoveable in the beleif of the doctrine of a reſurrection. To me it appears more probable, that he exhorts them, from the conſideration of the good evidences he had given that there would be a happy reſurrection of the faithful, to perſevere ſteddily in all that *work* and duty, which as chriſtians was required of them; becauſe from the doctrine he had been delivering they plainly ſaw, that *their labour would not be in vain.* According to which interpretation, they were *to be ſted-*

faſt

faſt and unmoveable in the ſame *work*, in which they were *to abound*.

The text conſiſts of theſe two parts, which I ſhall diſtinctly conſider: the exhortation to a courſe of duty, attended with ſome difficulty: and the encouraging motive to perſevere in it.

I. The exhortation to a courſe of duty, attended with ſome difficulty. *Be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.*

The work of the Lord, in which they were *to abound*, and *to be ſtedfaſt and unmoveable*, is the whole courſe of a chriſtian's duty; piety towards God, righteouſneſs and benevolence towards men, and ſobriety and temperance with regard to worldly enjoyments. This is *the work of the Lord*; the ſervice in which Chriſt, *our Lord and Maſter*, expects we ſhould be employed, if we would approve ourſelves his faithful ſervants. This is what the ſalutary grace of God in the goſpel has taught us: the *denying of ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and the living ſoberly, righteouſly and godlily in this preſent world.*

Now though this is the wiſeſt courſe we can take, the moſt fitting and reaſonable in itſelf, and the happieſt upon the whole, as it will give the moſt ſatisfaction to our own minds upon ſure foundations, and will ſecure our moſt important intereſts for the time to come;

come; yet we ſhall find it *a work* and *a labour:* and moreover we ſhall find ſome *dangers* as well as difficulties attending it, which will require the utmoſt of our *ſtedfaſtneſs* and reſolution to oppoſe and overcome.

Nothing is more fitting and reaſonable, than that we ſhould be ſeriouſly religious towards God; reverencing him as the moſt perfect of all beings, the creator, preſerver and ſupreme governor of the whole world; giving him our affections, as the beſt of all beings, and particularly as our own conſtant unwearied benefactor; yeilding him hearty thanks for the daily and hourly inſtances of his bounty; praying to him for the ſupply of our wants; and chearfully ſubmiting ourſelves to the conduct of his providence. It is likewiſe very fitting and reaſonable, that in the relations wherein God has placed us to each other we ſhould exemplify righteouſneſs and benevolence, as we would deſire that others ſhould be juſt and kind to us. And if we only conſulted the health and ſoundneſs of our bodies, the peace and comfort of our minds, and the preventing of innumerable bitter diſappointments, it is fitting and reaſonable that we ſhould moderate our affections towards the uncertain enjoyments of this world.

All theſe things, which contain the ſubſtance of our whole duty, are highly fitting and reaſonable, and tend to ſecure our true

happineſs, both in this life and in that which is to come.

But it will require ſome watchfulneſs over ourſelves, to engage us in the *ſteady* practice of theſe duties.

And beſides that there may ariſe in our minds a hankering inclination after ſomething or other not conſiſtent with our duty, and a wearineſs in the courſe of religious practice; there are *dangers* likewiſe ariſing, partly from the crafty inſinuations of evil companions, and partly from violent oppoſition.

There are numbers of men to be found, who will not bear the reſtraints of religion themſelves, and have wrought up their minds into ſuch averſion againſt it, and contempt of it, as to take pains to expoſe and ridicule it. Men of this character, when they ſee a perſon ſeriouſly inclined, and making conſcience of his duty, are ready enough to tell him, that he does wrong in laying reſtraints upon natural inclinations; that every natural inclination muſt be right, and fit to be indulged; that ſince there are pleaſures to be enjoyed in this world, and within our reach, it is fit we ſhould enjoy them while we can; that what is to come is out of ſight and uncertain, and that we need not give ourſelves any concern about it; and that if we will be wiſe we ſhall lay hold of the preſent opportunities for pleaſures or riches or honour and power, every one taking care for himſelf, and leaving others to ſhift for themſelves.

'Tis

'Tis plain, that ſuch repreſentations can be made by none but thoſe, who look upon the animal part of the human conſtitution as the principal; and the intelligent mind as intended, not to govern the appetite, but only to provide the more exquiſitely for its gratification. If men did in earneſt believe themſelves to be the creatures of a Being ſupremely wiſe, they could never entertain ſo abſurd a thought. But it is evident, not only that many act as if they did believe this abſurdity; but that too many are to be found, who throw ſtumbling blocks of this kind in the way of the ſerious and conſcientious; ridiculing eſpecially the duties of piety and of ſobriety, the one as meer ſuperſtition, and the other as cruelty and ſelf puniſhment. And though ſuch repreſentations may be ſhocking at firſt to ſerious minds, which have been trained up to quite other thoughts in a religious education; yet in youth eſpecially there is great danger: and that from this one thought; that they are now coming into the government of themſelves, and that it is not fit they ſhould always be under the reſtraints which they ſuffered in childhood; that in the exerciſe of ſuch liberties as theſe they ſhall be maſters indeed, and under no ſuch controll as that to which they have been accuſtomed. And even to perſons more advanced in years, if the principles of religion have not been well ſettled in the heart, by mature and frequent con-

conſideration, there will be *danger* whenever ſuch inſinuations are laid in the way.

Here therefore we ſee the ſeaſonableneſs and fitneſs of the apoſtle's exhortation, to be *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable* in the adherence to our duty, from the conſideration, that *our labour ſhall not be in vain*. And by theſe two words, *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable*, I look upon the apoſtle to mean the ſame thing. It is an exhortation to firmneſs and conſtancy. And the reaſon-why we ſhould be thus firm and conſtant, that is to ſay, the aſſurance that *our labour ſhall not be in vain*, but that all our religious reſtraints ſhall be conſidered and amply rewarded, will, if we give it its due weight and force, vaſtly overbalance all ſuch empty inſinuations.

But there are further *dangers* attending a courſe of religion and virtue; the dangers of perſecution. And perſecution appears in very different ſhapes; and acts with different degrees of violence. Sometimes the providence of God permits his faithful ſervants to ſuffer open violence, to the loſs of ſubſtance and liberty, and even life itſelf. Sometimes perſecution appears cheifly in that contempt and reproach, which hitherto we have conſidered only as the inſinuation of evil men, to deter ſerious minds from a religious courſe. Men who turn their minds in earneſt to religion, and are for practiſing of it in its various parts according to the dictates of their conſciences,

do actually and frequently meet with that contempt, which the ſcorners pretend religion deſerves. They are deſpiſed for their ſtrictneſs. They are meanly thought of, neglected and diſregarded; not only by others, but too often by their friends; not only by ſuch as have no ſerious ſenſe of religion, but too often by ſome who have a love for it, but are too narrow and contracted in their opinion concerning ſome things which relate to it, or elſe are for allowing themſelves liberties which other conſcientious minds cannot come into. Now this contempt, eſpecially if we take in the conſequences which it often brings along with it, to the depreſſing of a man's circumſtances in the world, as well as greiving his mind, is real perſecution. And either in this way, or in ſome other way, the apoſtle *Paul* has aſſured us, that *all who will live godlily in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution.* 2 Tim. iii. 12.

There is therefore good ground for the apoſtle's *exhortation* to *be ſtedfaſt and unmoveable in the work of the Lord*, in which we engage when we profeſs ourſelves to be chriſtians. If we will approve ourſelves of that character, we muſt maintain a firmneſs and reſolution to go on in our duty, notwithſtanding all the unwelcome conſequences relating to the things of this world. And all this we ſhall do, and ſhall ſhew the trueſt wiſdom in it, if we conſider the powerful

argument, that *our labour ſhall be ſo far from being in vain*, that it will be abundantly recompenced. Which is the true meaning of the laſt words of the text, delivered by the apoſtle in a manner of ſpeech, which implies more than it expreſſes.

But in this firſt part which we are now conſidering, the apoſtle further exhorts the Corinthian chriſtians, not only *to be ſtedfaſt and unmoveable*, but always *to abound in the work of the Lord*. By which words I underſtand, that he would have them always forward and ready, without any reluctancy; proceeding in *their work* in ſuch a manner as to ſhew, that they took a delight and pleaſure in it. He exhorts them not to be content with the thought, that in the diſcharge of a particular duty they had done what, according to the ſtrict letter of the word, was required of them; but to perform with pleaſure and delight whatever they beleived to be the mind of God relating to it.

It was the falſe gloſs of the Scribes and Phariſees upon the law of God delivered by *Moſes*, that if they refrained from killing their neighbour, they fulfilled the whole of that law which ſays, *Thou ſhalt do no murder*. But our Saviour ſhewed, that herein they only diſcovered the backwardneſs of their own hearts from anſwering the real intention of the law; which was, to reſtrain and prevent all tendency towards ſuch miſchief, as well as

the very action of murder itself: *Mat.* v. 22. particularly all unreasonable anger and opprobrious language. And with the like false gloss they would evade the duty of *honouring parents*; encouraging their followers to suffer their parents to starve, if they could but have it to say, that what might have been useful to them was before-hand dedicated to sacred uses; *Mat.* xv. 5. *Thus they made the commandment of God of no effect by their tradition.* But this was because their hearts were alienated from the love of God's law: otherwise they would not have laid such stumbling blocks in the way of those, who were obliged and inclined to practise it.

It is the direct contrary to this principle, which the apostle exhorts to in the text. He exhorts us *to abound in the work of the Lord:* which we can never do without taking delight in it. And there is that in the divine commands themselves, which calls for this delight, which justly claims our esteem and affection. And farther there is that sure recompence and reward awaiting the faithful obedience to them, which is a sufficient encouragement for *abounding* in the practice. And that is what the apostle more immediately refers to in the text.

The mention of this leads me therefore to consider

II. The encouraging motive to persevere in that course of christian duty, which the

the apoſtle in the text calls *the work of the Lord.*

The motive is, *ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

This is ſpoken to chriſtians, who had been taught the certainty of the doctrine of a happy reſurrection to the perſevering faithful; of which the reſurrection of Chriſt Jeſus, our judge and rewarder, was a happy pledge. Chriſt had, in the name of God his heavenly Father, taught his followers a holy doctrine, and appealed to the many mighty works which he wrought, that it was God who ſent him to teach it. He ſuffered many indignities and hardſhips in the courſe of preaching this doctrine: and declared to his diſciples, that at length he ſhould ſuffer death for it: but he aſſured them, at the ſame time, that he ſhould riſe again, and advance his faithful followers, after their death, to that *eternal life* of complete happineſs, which in the courſe of his doctrine he had ſo often promiſed for their encouragement.

Now this reſurrection to *an eternal life* of complete happineſs, is that encouraging motive *to be ſtedfaſt*, perſevering and *abounding in the work of the Lord*, which I am more particularly to conſider.

We are not to imagine, that the meer riſing from death, and being reſtored to life, is the whole of that future bleſſedneſs, which ſhall prove that *our labour in the Lord is not*

in

in vain. Any one who has thoroughly conſidered how great is the bleſſedneſs of that *eternal life*, which Chriſt ſo often promiſed to his followers, would never chooſe to return to ſuch a life as he had led in this world; if upon the reſurrection he had his choice which life to lead.

If a raiſed chriſtian was to return to the ſame kind of life he had led before, and even were aſſured that he ſhould maintain his integrity; yet it muſt be through ſo many ſnares and difficulties, and attended with ſo many ſorrows, partly relating to his own infirmities, partly ariſing from the natural frailty of all worldly enjoyments, partly from the weakneſs, the faults and the ſufferings of his friends and relatives; that he could never chooſe to live ſuch a life over again, when he had the proſpect of that happy *life* to which the ſaints will be raiſed. If he might, upon returning to this world, live longer in it than *Methuſelah* himſelf did, and enjoy more of its riches, and pleaſures and greatneſs, than ever any man did enjoy: yet he would at once reject it, for the hope of that *life*, which ſhall be the portion of the raiſed juſt; becauſe of the infinite difference between the happineſs of the one life and the other; beſides that *life* in this world muſt at length be broken off by *death*, whereas *the life*, which the ſaints ſhall lead after the reſurrection ſhall never have a period. Let us

therefore

therefore ſpend a few moments in conſidering *the life* itſelf, and the character of *eternity* annexed to it; that we may ſee how true it is, that the *ſtedfaſt* perſevering chriſtian ſhall find *his labour in the Lord is not in vain.*

1. Let us conſider *the life* itſelf. And we ſhall find, that it is *a life* more ſuited to the nobler part of our conſtitution, thoſe faculties which raiſe us above the inferior, meer animal part of the creation, and render us capable in ſome meaſure of knowing the greateſt and beſt of all Beings, and of enjoying his favour. The animal part of our conſtitution, being allied to the mind, does in this preſent life give us many hindrances from progreſs in that kind of knowlege, which is moſt ſuited to its dignity, and of greateſt importance. We ſhould ſee more of the wonders of divine wiſdom and power and goodneſs, in the government as well as in the creation of the world, if our appetites towards earthly enjoyments did not prevent us. We ſhould ſee more of the beauty and excellency of what is really good, and taſte the pleaſure of ſuch diſcoveries, if our animal inclinations did not darken our minds, and vitiate our reliſh. By means of this darkneſs and this falſe taſte, we are often betrayed into actions which are contrary to our duty and our true intereſt; which bring remorſe upon ſober reflection. And beſides that upon ſuch occaſions

caſions we cannot juſtify to our own minds what we have allowed ourſelves to practiſe, whereby confuſion is introduced inſtead of peace; beſides this, there is attending this remorſe a ſenſe of the diſpleaſure of that moſt perfect being, our creator and rightful governor, to whom we are accountable for our whole conduct, and our conſtant benefactor to whom we are indebted for whatever we are and whatever we poſſeſs. Whatever diſappointment or trouble we meet with, ariſing from the natural frailty and imperfection of the enjoyments of this life, is moſt of all aggravated and inhanced by reflections of this kind; which are ſufficient to make a man unhappy in the greateſt affluence of worldly proſperity. And even if upon the whole we maintain a better character than that of deſpiſers of religion: yet every fault into which we are betrayed takes off ſomething from the comfort and happineſs of *the life* we lead here below; and conſequently muſt be ſaid to cut off juſt ſo much from *life* itſelf in the ſenſe in which we often, and not improperly ſpeak of it, when we ſay, concerning joyful people, that they are *alive*, and concerning the heavy hearted, that they are *lifeleſs*.

But that *life*, which the ſaints ſhall enjoy after the reſurrection, will be free from all theſe diſturbances; and therefore will be more properly called *life*, than that which we paſs through here below. For beſides that there will

will be none of thoſe objects, the deſire after which betrayed them here into folly; the ſpirit will have its proper rule over the inferior part of the conſtitution. Nor will the raiſed happy have any evil company to ſollicite them to evil courſes, or to miſlead their minds to a wrong choice. They will contract no guilt; and conſequently be troubled with no remorſe. There will be no terrifying apprehenſion of God's diſpleaſure; but a joyful ſenſe of his complacency, as approving the faithful care they have exerciſed, upon the whole, to maintain their integrity in the ſtate of trial. And this, together with the regular employment of the faculties of the mind, without interruption from the impediments of animal nature, or any kind of ſorrow, with the vaſt increaſe of knowlege in the works of the great creator and the wonders of his providence, and the enlarged views of that wiſdom and righteouſneſs and goodneſs, whereby he governs the world, and together with the full ſatisfaction of the fitneſs of yeilding to him their beſt affections, will give to their condition the name of *life*, in the moſt genuine and proper ſenſe of the word; as there will be *activity*, the moſt regularly and moſt joyfully employed, without any interruption from ſorrow or diſorder.

2. Let us conſider the character of *eternity*, additional to the nature of *the life* itſelf which the raiſed ſaints ſhall lead: and then we ſhall ſee, that it is ſtill more properly

called *life*, becauſe it will never be broken off by death. A mortal, that is to ſay *a dying life*, is a ſort of inconſiſtency. And ſuch is the life we lead here below. We are dying from the time we enter upon life: and death is continually making its approaches towards us. If this were the caſe of the raiſed ſaints; or if they could have any apprehenſion that this was their caſe; the happineſs of their life would be very much diminiſhed. But upon their reſurrection, *Death will be ſwallowed up for ever:* which phraſe, *for ever*, is the plain meaning of the apoſtle, when in the 54th verſe of this chapter he renders the words of the prophet *Iſaiah*, xxv. 8. agreeably to our tranſlation, *Death is ſwallowed up in victory*. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *overcame* death not only for himſelf, but for his followers: and we therefore, if we perſevere his faithful followers, that is, according to the words of our text, if we are *ſtedfaſt*, *unmoveable*, *always abounding in the work of the Lord*, ſhall reap the fruits of this *victory* in *everlaſting life:* we ſhall ever enjoy *a life* which is fit always to be deſired, and the loſs of which could never be recompenſed.

Judge now, whether the apoſtle had not good reaſon to ſay to chriſtians, who had been taught the certainty of a happy reſurrection to the perſevering faithful, *Ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* Every chriſtian, who believes this doctrine, *knows* aſſuredly, that *the labour* of the faithful *is not in vain.* He knows, that it is ſo

far from being *in vain*, that it will be recompenſed beyond all power of expreſſion or conception. And ſuch figures of ſpeech, including in the deſign much more than is ſtrictly and literally contained in the words, are frequent in the New Teſtament.

And now, my brethren, which of the two ſhall we chooſe; which ſhall we prefer? Shall we chooſe ſin, which is *the work of the Devil, and the wages of it, which is death:* or ſhall we chooſe the courſe of chriſtian duty, preſcribed by our Lord and Maſter; and *eternal life, which is the gift of God through him* to all who *ſtedfaſtly* perſevere in that courſe? It is true, by a reſolute perſeverance in this chriſtian courſe, and by *abounding in the work* which as chriſtians we engage in, we may be expoſed to ſome difficulties: we may meet with contempt and reproach from ſome of our acquaintance: we may poſſibly have the greif to be meanly thought of by ſome whom we heartily love, and whoſe favour we are very deſirous to retain. But conſider, that *the freindſhip of this world is enmity towards God:* and that conſequently, if, to court the favour of any mortal man, or ſociety of men, we venture to do that which we know our impartial judge diſapproves and abhors, or refuſe to do that which we verily beleive he requires; we deſtroy the peace of our own minds, for the ſake of that which can never make us a recompence. What is the freindſhip of frail dying man, when compared with

the complacency of the all-perfect and ever-living God? And what is the loss of such freindship, when compared to the displeasure of the greatest and wisest and best of beings, our rightful governor and injured benefactor; whose present observation we cannot avoid, and whose judgment we can by no means escape?

But consider again *the life* itself, which the raised saints shall lead, and see if you can find in your hearts to forego it for any, or for all the enjoyments of this life; or whether it is possible to be exposed to any miseries in this world, which the blessedness, the eternal blessedness of that *life* will not abundantly recompense.

I have already mentioned contempt and reproach. But suppose that in this transitory state your sufferings should be abundantly greater; suppose that for your *stedfastness* in what you beleive to be your duty, you should be reduced to poverty, or confined to a prison, or even deprived of life itself, which has been the case of many of God's faithful servants: what is all this when laid in the balance against that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, which even these afflictions themselves will* * *work out for you?*

And if it is worth your while, to suffer the greatest and most bitter afflictions here, rather than forego *eternal life:* what is there in any or all the short-lived enjoyments of this

* 2 *Cor.* iv. 17, 18.

this world, to be ſet in competition with that everlaſting complete happineſs, which is to be enjoyed in the preſence of God? Is there any thing in the pleaſures of ſenſe, even thoſe which are lawful and not imbittered with remorſe, comparable to the high ſatisfaction of an eſtabliſhed regularity of mind, making continual increaſes in the nobleſt knowlege, and the raviſhing delight of God's complacency? Is there any honour and dignity to be enjoyed among dying men, themſelves attended at the beſt with many infirmities and follies, comparable to the approbation of the eternal God, the wiſeſt and moſt righteous and holy, the greateſt and moſt powerful, and the moſt abundantly good, and, in one word, the moſt abſolutely perfect of all beings? And what is there in all the riches we can heap up here on earth, which after all we muſt leave behind us, to compare with that rich treaſure of a well furniſhed mind, and that ceaſeleſs fund of joy which will ariſe from the thought, that its happineſs ſhall be increaſing to all eternity, a happineſs ſuited to the dignity of its nobleſt faculties and powers?

It is eaſy to ſee what choice a wiſe man would make. *Man, in his beſt ſtate here* upon earth, is altogether vanity. But *they, who ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain the future world and the reſurrection from the dead,* (to ſpeak in our Saviour's own words, *Luke* xx. 35, 36.) *will be equal to the angels.* They will enjoy as complete a happineſs in all reſpects,

as

as their exalted faculties will be capable of; greater *than eye hath ſeen, or ear heard, or ever entered into the heart of man to conceive.* And this complete happineſs will be the portion of thoſe, who ſhall be found *ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.*

Let us therefore, labour earneſtly after thoſe habits, of piety, of righteouſneſs and univerſal benevolence, and of moderation with reſpect to earthly enjoyments, which conſtitute this character. Let us aſſure ourſelves, that the character of *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord,* will never be attained by mere fits and ſtarts in religion, or any ſlight and low attainments in any thing that is good; but muſt ariſe, with the aſſiſtance of divine grace, from habits, ſettled by frequent and ſerious conſideration. And if we do in earneſt turn our hearts this way; if we make theſe good things the ſubject of our ſincere deſires as well as frequent meditations, and do in earneſt aſk the aids of God's heavenly grace: theſe habits, the pledges and the beginings of a complete everlaſting felicity, will be fixed within us. We ſhall then *be kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation*; and ſhall, while we continue here below, *be ready for every good work,* and increaſe in our uſefulneſs the longer we live, beſides retaining an inward peace and joy in our minds. Thus ſhall our conqueſt of ſin be ſecured; and *an entrance*

entrance will be miniſtred to us abundantly into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

When any of our pious friends are removed from us by death, it is a comfort to have reaſon to beleive, that this will be their portion; that as they were *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, and abounded in the work of the Lord, ſo their labour in his ſervice will not be in vain.* And this we have good reaſon to beleive concerning our deceaſed brother, the reverend Mr. *Iſaac Kimber*, whoſe death is the occaſion of my diſcourſing on this ſubject. His *ſtedfaſtneſs* in what he beleived to be his duty, under manifold diſcouragements, deſerves to be remembred with honour. And becauſe his merit was not duly regarded in his lifetime, I do for that very reaſon chooſe to take the more notice of him now.

He was born in the year 1692, at *Wantage* in *Berkſhire:* and coming thence to *London*, applied himſelf to the learned languages under the direction of Dr. *John Ward*, profeſſor of rhetoric at *Greſham College*, and to academical ſtudies under that of the reverend Mr. *John Eames*. Of both theſe excellent inſtructors he always ſpoke with high reſpect: and under their guidance made the ſwifteſt progreſs in a great variety of learning, that I ever obſerved in the like compaſs of time; eſpecially conſidering the difficulties with which from the begining he ſtruggled,

ſtruggled, which would have diſcouraged moſt minds from going on. He diſcovered a genius capable of receiving any kind of knowlege that was worth the ſeeking.

His converſation was always grave and ſerious, but without any mixture of moroſeneſs or inclination to diſpleaſe. To ſay that he was a man of great integrity, is to give only a ſmall part of his character. And yet even the maintaining that, under a long ſeries of difficult trials, deſerves a high commendation. But he took delight in doing the good that lay in his power. The grand view, to which he made all his ſtudies ſubſervient, was the doing good to the ſouls of men in preaching the goſpel of Chriſt. And in this view his cheif ſtudy was that of the holy Scriptures themſelves, which he made the foundation of all his public exerciſes.

His real worth was known to very few. But that was owing to his great modeſty and diffidence of himſelf. A much ſmaller degree of abilities and attainments would have made ſome forward men much courted and honoured.

He had not, in his public miniſtrations, all that livelineſs, which is ſo attractive in a popular ſpeaker: and to this his circumſtances might in ſome meaſure contribute. But it was evident, that he choſe the ſoft and inſtructive, rather than the affectionate and moving manner of addreſs. The viſible aim of his diſcourſes was to inſtruct the mind,

mind, and to regulate the practice, rather than to inflame the paſſions. As in delivering them he did not truſt to his memory, ſo the ſhortneſs of his ſight was a great diſadvantage to him; eſpecially in the latter part of his life, when one of his eyes was become uſeleſs. But there was that ſtrength of judgment and that regular connexion in what he delivered, which would make their way to the heart of a ſerious attentive hearer; ſuch a one, I mean, as could be delighted with the doctrines of the goſpel in their native ſimplicity; for he directed all his diſcourſes that way. I look upon it as a loſs to the public, that a propoſal, made not many years after his entrance on the miniſtry, for printing twenty of his ſermons, failed of ſucceſs. If they had ſeen the light, it would have appeared, whatever might be thought of his manner of ſpeaking, (and it was ſaid of the apoſtle * *Paul* himſelf, that *his bodily preſence was weak and his ſpeech contemptible*) that yet his writings were weighty.

He was called to the paſtoral care here in *London*, in conjunction with a miniſter, who is ſince deceaſed. But whether it was apprehended that the ſociety could not well maintain two, or whatever elſe was the reaſon; the conjunction was rejected after it had been agreed to. And afterwards, in the year 1724, he was actually joined with another miniſter, at a conſiderable diſtance in the country.

* 2 *Cor.* x. 10.

But the perverſe diſpoſitions of ſome with whom he had to do, and his own ſteady reſolution, not to comply with any meaſures which would diſturb the peace of his conſcience, prevented his ſtaying long there. He was ſo much affected with the uneaſineſs of that ſituation, that in one of his letters he told me, *he was afraid it had hurted his mind.* Which a man of his calm temper and inoffenſive behaviour could never have ſaid, if he had met with tolerable treatment. For it was remarkable in him, that he ſtudiouſly forbore ſaying an unkind thing even concerning thoſe from whom he ſuffered moſt; was uneaſy at any harſh reflections againſt them; and though he did from principle abhor the ſpirit of impoſition, and had felt the effects of it, yet he would make the beſt apology he could for thoſe, whoſe forward ignorant zeal prompted them to the exerciſe of it.

After his return to *London*, he miniſtred ſtatedly at two places, in the quality of aſſiſtant. But ſo it fell out, that the two ſocieties agreeing afterwards to meet in one and the ſame place, no room was left for his further ſervice; and thereby he was cut off from the benefit he uſed to reap from both. I mention this as one of the many difficulties and diſcouragements which fell to his ſhare. From this time, which was many years agoe, he miniſtred only occaſionally; and was obliged, for his neceſſary ſupport, to betake himſelf to a ſedentary employment, which con-

fined him to close application of the mind, without giving opportunity for such bodily exercise as should secure his health.

He bore this and all his other troubles with an equality of mind, which has often raised my admiration. And though, as has already been observed, the difficulties with which he struggled were probably the occasion of his not being so lively in the pulpit as otherwise he would have been, which very thing brought upon him the further discouragement of seeing himself to many hearers unacceptable: yet in conversation he always maintained an agreeable, innocent chearfulness: nor did I ever hear one word of repining at the disposals of providence drop from his mouth. And from what I have seen of him, now for near forty years intimate acquaintance, I make no doubt to ascribe this to principles of religion, firmly fixed and established in his heart.

Some of the sharpest of his trials arose from his exceeding great tenderness of affection to his near relations. Of which I shall mention only that one sore affliction, which not only prevented his enjoying comfort in the nearest relation of all, but did for upwards of three and twenty years bring continual sorrow upon him, and sometimes danger. The necessity of sometimes confining the dear partner of his life, of whom he was infinitely fond, besides the great charge of it, especially as his circumstances were always far from plentiful,

must

muſt have given that exerciſe of patience; which is better conceived than expreſſed.

Upon the whole, I cannot forbear ſaying: that few, if any, of my acquaintance have borne a ſeries of continual difficulties and diſcouragements in ſo exemplary a manner as he has done: which is the reaſon of my going ſo far out of my uſual way in enlarging upon his character. He has adorned that condition of life, which God was pleaſed to allot for his portion: and has given his ſurviving freinds good reaſon to hope, that *his labour in the Lord is not in vain*; but that he will ſhine with a diſtinguiſhed luſtre in that upper world, where the ſervants of God will be accounted of, not according to the figure they made here below, but according to the regard which they ſhewed, in the time of trial, to the wiſe and righteous, the good and gracious governour of all.

His removal was very ſudden; by an apoplectic fit; which ſeized him but about eight hours before his death, and left him the opportunity only of ſpeaking a very few words, wherein he earneſtly recommended himſelf to the mercy of God through Jeſus Chriſt: after which he never opened his mouth or his eyes. How happy is it *to be always ready!* May that be the caſe of us all! And for that purpoſe let us take care, that we be *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; foraſmuch as we know that our labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.*

F I N I S.